IN THE SERVICE OF KNOWLEDGE: RACE, GENDER, AND CLASS IN A NEW SOUTH UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY, 1930-1980

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ABSTRACT

Jessica Auer: In the Service of Knowledge: Race, Gender, and Class in a New South University Community, 1930-1980
(Under the direction of Katherine Turk)

"In the Service of Knowledge" joins a growing body of literature that explores the rise of the so-called service economy, focusing historical attention on an understudied economic phenomenon in the twentieth century – the large-scale medical-educational complex in the transitioning South. Unlike other treatments of the "knowledge economy," this dissertation examines the development of the non-academic and non-professional workforce at one such anchor institution, Duke University, in Durham, North Carolina. Enormous nonprofit institutions of higher learning like Duke University imagined themselves as drivers of middle-class and high-technology growth, increasingly essential in a region with a history of poverty and cultural "backwardness." At the same time, they became employers of a large number of low-wage non-academic workers, creating new working-class communities as well. Long ignored in the historical literature, these workers and the cultural perception of their labors challenge our understandings of the knowledge economy.

Swept up in a fundamental reorientation of the political economy in Durham, Duke administrators, clients, and workers initially marshaled and adapted existing understandings of gender, race, and class in order to make sense of the burgeoning non-academic workforce on campus. In so doing, they often reinforced and repackaged patterns of racial and gender inequality in both social and spatial terms. Buoyed by contemporary social movements, mostly

black non-academic workers began to challenge the low-wages and racial scripts that structured their labors in the 1960s and 1970s. However, Duke administrators, like those elsewhere, managed to beat back many of these challenges by appealing to the university's reputation and nonprofit character, laying the groundwork for the vast disparities within universities today.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There were many days when I feared that I would never be done with this dissertation. Its completion required a monumental outlay of intellectual effort, emotional labor, and financial sacrifice, but not one I bore alone. I am thankful to so many whose assistance, support, and kindness helped challenge me when I found myself in an intellectual rut, buoy me when my spirits were down, and keep me safe and secure when the inevitable emergency strained my graduate school budget. I offer gratitude and a few words of thanksgiving here, though I know it could not satisfy the debt owed.

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Lars, Kirsten, and Erika are four of the brightest, kindest, and most loving people I have ever known, and I very literally could not have gotten through this without them. To be surrounded by such inspiring women is a true blessing.

I cannot begin to express the depth of my gratitude for my loving, generous, and patient family – they provided the emotional and intellectual foundation upon which all else was built. From the earliest, my Mom and Dad have always encouraged my intellectual curiosity, provided a safe harbor when life got rough, and given me a helpful push when I have been tempted to play it safe. LJ's pride in me has always lifted me up. I hope she knows how proud I am of the kind, loving, capable woman I get to call sister. As a kid, Jenny taught me that I shouldn't have to hide who I was to fit in, and as an adult, she has shown me a loyalty and devotion I hope to one day to be deserving of.

Finally, to the great love of my life, Evan (and our pets). Our relationship has taught me to love and value myself in ways I never thought possible. There is no one I would rather be quarantining with as I write this. I can't wait for the next chapter of our lives together to begin.

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INTRODUCTION

"Textile mills built the New South," declared the authors of the classic labor history of Piedmont industrialization, *Like a Family*, in 1987.[1] That work charted the first entrance of a largely white working class into waged labor across whole swaths of the American south. In North Carolina, the state's other major product, tobacco, drew a more racially mixed group of workers to factories that churned out cigarettes for the nation's smokers.[2] According to boosters in towns across the region, these factories promised to pry the South from the grip of planter feudalism and violent white supremacy, and deliver it to a bright, "modern" future of economic dynamism and social harmony.[3] But by the 1960s and 1970s, many of the mills and stemmeries that built the New South had closed, moved, or downsized into near-

[1]Jacqueline Dowd Hall et al., *Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), xvii.

[2]For a history of the tobacco industry in Durham, see Dolores Janiewski, *Sisterhood Denied: Race, Gender, and Class in a New South Community* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1985); and Beverly W. Jones, "Race, Sex, and Class: Black Female Tobacco Workers in Durham, North Carolina, 1920-1940, and the Development of Female Consciousness," *Feminist Studies* 10, no. 3 (Fall 1984): 441-451.

[3]The "New South" was a term used by Southerners in the late 19th century who wanted to reshape the region's economic and racial reputation and attract or develop industry. Historians of the postbellum and twentieth century South continue to use the term widely, though there is vigorous debate among them over how much social relations were truly transformed. For a useful overview of the historiography of the New South see the essays in James Humphreys, ed., *Interpreting American History: The New South* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2018). For a discussion of the New South vision for Durham, see Janiewski, *Sisterhood Denied;* and Leslie Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham: Gender, Class, and Black Community Development in the Jim Crow South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008). Duke's southern location played a significant role in its labor history. For one, the racial dynamics were unlikely to be fully duplicated elsewhere. Yale employed mostly Irish immigrants in service positions in the first half of the century, for instance. In addition, Duke administrators, and other civic leaders at times, insisted on presenting the university as an engine for regional modernization and sometimes liberalization, which required engaging with the South's history. Still, most college and university administrations wrestled with questions of nonprofit privilege, economic transformation, and the role of the university in civic life. And, if to different degrees, most came to be major employers of service and clerical labor. I have sometimes compared Duke to other institutions, where comparisons were possible, appropriate, and illustrative.

oblivion.[4] An assortment of service and technology industries rose to replace them as anchor institutions of the New South's latest reimagining: the "Sunbelt South," a forward-looking incubator of research, innovation, and cultural modernization.[5] Durham, North Carolina exemplified this trend, transforming from the world's leading "tobacco town" to the "City of Medicine" over the course of the twentieth century.[6]

Durham's Sunbelt "knowledge economy," like those elsewhere, centered on the increasing importance of an institution of higher education. Such institutions were not new to the twentieth century, of course. Building on European precedents, a variety of small seminaries and other "colleges" dotted the colonial and early national landscape.[7] By the mid-nineteenth century, elements of the "modern" university had become to take shape, a process accelerated by a series of massive philanthropic gifts and the increasing embrace of the "German" model of research and scholarship.[8] Some even forged formal relationships

[4]For de-industrialization in the South, see Timothy J. Minchin, *Empty Mills: The Fight Against Imports and the Decline of the U.S. Textile Industry* (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2013); Janiewski, *Sisterhood Denied*, 171-174.

[5]For conception of the Sunbelt South and the importance of service and technology to that vision, see Elizabeth Shermer, *Sunbelt Capitalism: Phoenix and the Transformation of American Politics*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); and Bruce J. Schulman, *From Cotton Belt to Sunbelt: Federal Policy, Economic Development, and the Transformation of the South, 1938-1980* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994). Schulman cites the Durham-Chapel Hill area and Research Triangle Park as a chief example of this sunbelt vision. Schulman, *From Cotton Belt to Sunbelt*, 169-173.

[6]The city launched a campaign branding itself the "City of Medicine" in 1980. Martha Carolina Rundles, "The Rise and Fall of the Brand: 'Durham, City of Medicine, USA'" (master's thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2004).

[7] See John Thelin, *A History of Higher Education* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011); Christopher Lucas, *American Higher Education: A History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994); and Margaret Sumner, *Collegiate Republic: Cultivating an Ideal Society in Early America* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014).

[8] See Frederick Ruldolph, *The American College and University: A History* (New York: Knopf, 1962); Thelin, *A History of Higher Education*; Burton Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America* (New York: Norton, 1976).

with hospitals, as the field of medicine grew more professionalized and became a growing object of scientific inquiry.[9] Self-styled research institutions never entirely displaced the liberal arts college, normal school, or land grant university, but they grew in size and prominence through the early twentieth century and a focus on academic scholarly production spread beyond their walls.[10] Academics in an increasingly diverse set of fields began to view "knowledge production" as an essential element of their work. However, it was over the middle of the twentieth century that a more pronounced ecosystem which observers have dubbed the "knowledge economy" took shape, buoyed by growing student enrollments, considerable state investment in higher education, and, especially, an expanding market for the knowledge produced by academic research. Massive amounts of capital and social cache began to flow through universities, hospitals, research institutes, pharmaceutical and technology companies, consultancies, and any number of other associated entities. [11]

Duke University's ascendance serves as a paradigmatic example of this broader economic transformation. Over the course of the twentieth century, determined leaders had elevated a small regional college into national prominence, nurturing its growth into a medical-educational complex of enormous proportions – Duke University. Moreover, the university's economic importance and significance grew just as the city's industrial might

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[9] See Paul Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine* (New York: Basic Books, 1982); Robert Durden, *The Launching of Duke University, 1924-1949* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993).

[10] See Ruldolph, *The American College and University: A History*; Thelin, *A History of Higher Education;* Laurence Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); and Roger Geiger, *To Advance Knowledge: The Growth of American Research Universities, 1900-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

[11] See Rebecca Lowen, *Creating the Cold War University: The Transformation of Stanford* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Margaret Pugh O'Mara, *Cities of Knowledge: Cold War Science and the Search for the Next Silicon Valley* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015); and Stuart Leslie, *The Cold War and American Science: The Military-Industrial-Academic Complex at MIT and Stanford* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

withered.[12] By the 1960's, Duke had become Durham County's largest private employer and would shortly become one of the largest in the state.[13]

Yet, despite their having become major economic institutions by midcentury, most historians of higher education have completely eschewed discussions of universities as employers, and especially employers of nonacademic labor.[14] In one recent study of what she called the "ultimate post-industrial city," scholar Margert O'Mara framed her work as the history of the "scientists, the mathematicians, the economists, and the engineers of the new intellectual technology."[15] But a closer examination reveals that the high-wage knowledge economy in Durham was inseparable from the growth of the low-wage service workforce that accompanied it. The American system of higher education represented middle-class uplift and the promise of social mobility but, in its particular form, it also depended

[12]This was mirrored elsewhere in former industrial towns. See LaDale Winling, *Building the Ivory Tower: Universities and Metropolitan Development in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018).

[13]Robert R. Korstad and James L. Leloudis, *To Right These Wrongs: The North Carolina Fund and the Battle to End Poverty and Inequality in 1960s America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 176.

[14]Examples abound, but for an indicative sample, see Lowen, *Creating the Cold War University*; Glenn Altschuler and Isaac Kramnick, *Cornell: A History, 1940-2015* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014); and Morton and Phyllis Keller, *Making Harvard Modern: The Rise of America's University* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). The same critique holds true for foundational surveys in the field. This dissertation builds on several important exceptions, most of which have focused on strikes between the 1960s and 1980s. Gregg Michel, "'Union Power, Soul Power': Unionizing Johns Hopkins University Hospital, 1959-1974," *Labor History* 38 (Dec. 1996), 28-66. Herbert Janick, "Yale Blue: Unionization at Yale University, 1931-1985," *Labor History* 28 (1987): 342-369; John Hoerr, *We Can't Eat Prestige: The Women Who Organized Harvard* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997); and Deborah Sue Elkin, "Labor and the Left: The Limits of Acceptable Dissent at Yale University, 1920s to 1950s" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1995). In later chapters, my work builds on and reinterprets two works of historical sociology on labor organizing at Duke. Erik Ludwig, "Closing in on the 'Plantation': Coalition Building and the Role of Black Women's Grievances in Duke University Labor Disputes, 1965-1968," *Feminist Studies* 25, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 79-94; and Karen Brodkin, *Caring by the Hour: Women, Work, and Organizing at Duke Medical Center* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988). I take as a model one particular standout in the history of higher education, which examines the role of faculty wives and servants in early colleges, Sumner, *Collegiate Republic*.

[15]She was quoting Daniel Bell, a theorist of post-industrialism. O'Mara, *Cities of Knowledge*, 12.

essentially on the low-wage, gendered, and racialized labors of many people.[16] The ranks of professors and doctors expanded over the course of the century, but these numbered only in the hundreds. Many more worked the campuses of Duke as housekeepers, cooks, stenographers, aides, secretaries, and maintenance workers. Instead of taking their place at the foot of a loom or in a pungent drying room, thousands now toiled each day in the service of knowledge.

The process by which the university and hospital gradually became new centers of working-class life in Durham was complex and contested. Despite the increasingly conspicuous size of its nonacademic workforce, Duke only awkwardly acknowledged its function as an employer, with a self-perception oftentimes hovering perilously between loyal benefactor and overt-taxed charity. And as Durhamites were drawn into this purportedly new "knowledge economy," they confronted the legacies of older relations of gender, race, and class. In daily interactions and larger-scale conflicts, administrators, managers, workers, students, and patients wrestled with competing understandings of the prerogatives and responsibilities of the university as workplace.[17] The labor relations that characterized the modern university evolved out of this prolonged historical process of negotiation and

[16]For the view of universities as middle-class institutions, see Ruldolph, *The American College and University: A History;* David O. Levine, *The American College and the Culture of Aspiration, 1915-1940* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986).

[17] The term "administrator" I have reserved for senior leaders in the university and hospital, like the university president and vice presidents, deans, superintendents, provosts, and counsels. As Duke's management structure became more complex and the university created roles like Personnel Director or Vice President of Finance, I have included these too in the ranks of administrators. I use the term "manager" to refer to those individuals overseeing major departments of clerical and service workers – managers of the dining halls, housekeeping, records library, and hospital billing, for instance. Lower level authorities I call "supervisors," to denote both their management of employees and their lack of policy-making power. These include positions like dietitian, head housekeepers, and shift supervisor.

conflict. These struggles thus reveal new dimensions to the knowledge economy's emergence and its impact on class in modern America.

In 1924, James Duke, a tobacco and energy magnate, made a monumental series of gifts totaling over forty million dollars to launch provincial, segregated Trinity College in the small but bustling "New South" town of Durham, North Carolina on a path towards immense growth.[18] Trinity College moved to Durham from its previous home in rural Randolph County about fifty miles east in 1892, but continued to struggle in the decades that followed. The efforts of William Few, professor of English and Trinity's president beginning in 1910, transformed the college's fortunes. A Southern boy made good, Few embodied the aspirations and beliefs of the men leading the "New South" revolution. Moreover, he believed that the university had a role to play in achieving it. Few had witnessed first-hand the prosperity and cosmopolitanism of both the old British universities of Cambridge and Oxford and also of stateside institutions like Harvard and Princeton. The South needed an educational revolution, he argued. Without it, the region would remain mired in the backwardness that accompanied planter aristocracy and slavery.

After years of careful cultivation, William Few and Benjamin Duke, the elder son of the patriarch Washington Duke, prevailed upon James, the younger brother and far more successful businessman, to plan for his philanthropic future with Trinity in mind. In 1924,

[18] James Duke initially vested the Duke Foundation with forty million dollars in stock, a figure that was doubled upon his death later that year. The university was to receive the income from about one-third of that sum. In addition, Duke gave gifts totaling almost twenty million directly to the university for building expenses. For history of this solicitation and the intricacies of the Duke donation, see Durden, *The Launching of Duke University, 1924-1949*, 10-26. For a history of James Duke and the Duke family, see Robert Durden, *The Dukes of Durham, 1865-1929* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1975). For a survey of the "great" turn-of-the-century gifts to higher education, see Roger Geiger, *The History of American Higher Education: Learning and Culture from the Founding to World War II* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 492.

James Duke finalized proposals to endow a charitable foundation, the largest beneficiary of which would be Trinity College. In honor of Duke's largesse, the Board of the college agreed to rename it Duke University, ostensibly after James' father. The early twentieth century was a period of expansion in higher education across the nation, and James Duke's gift signaled that the South too would take part in this project.[19] He believed that "education […] is, next to religion, the greatest civilizing influence," and felt the limitations of his home region prodigiously in that regard.[20] Thus, in his mind, the new university that now bore his name was destined to "uplift mankind" in the South.[21]

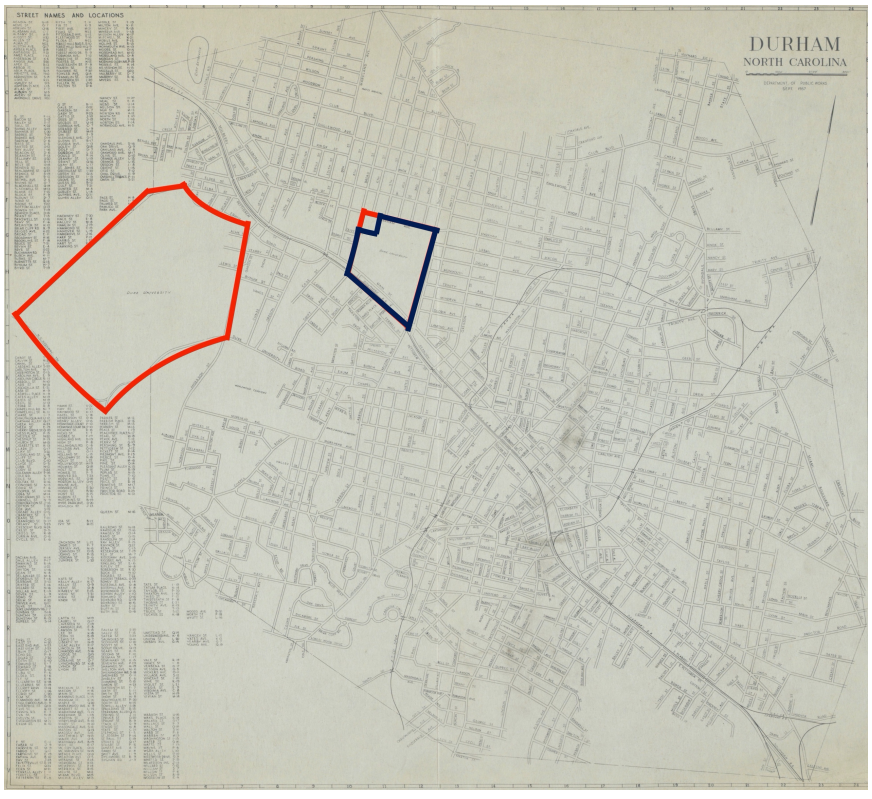

Figure 0.1 Durham City Map, 1937. Trinity College property marked in blue. Duke University in red. Note that only university property on the map is marked.

Over nearly a decade, the university undertook a massive construction program that tripled its physical footprint and transformed the city's west end. On the strength of this windfall and the architectural expansion it allowed, Duke University

[19] For the early 20th century as period of growth in higher education, see Winling, *Building the Ivory Tower*, 2-5.

[20] Duke, quoted in Durden, *The Launching of Duke University*, 28.

[21] Ibid.

established a host of new facilities and programs, including the medical school and teaching hospital that Few had long desired.[22] This transformation had profound and long-lasting consequences for Durham. Over the twentieth century, Duke University fundamentally altered the city's self-image: from a dynamic but grungy town of the "New South," to a thriving and upwardly mobile "Sunbelt" city.

Before Duke University's ascendance, Durham was known primarily as the nation's biggest "tobacco town." When the Duke family pioneered the mechanical production of the cigarette in the 1880s, they guaranteed Durham's leading status in tobacco for decades.[23] In the closing decades of the 19th century, several successful tobacco men invested their profits in what would become the city's second major industry, textiles.[24] Together these industries employed more than eleven thousand workers by 1930.[25]

But like most New South industrial towns, Durham featured uneven development and widespread inequality. The small but powerful capitalist class thrived: men like Julian Carr and James Duke reaped fortunes from the tobacco and textile factories dominating the city's turn-of-the-century landscape. However, dashing the hopes of one early booster who called Durham "an asylum for the poor," wages in these industries were notoriously low, the work seasonal, and working conditions brutal.[26] And, according to one sociologist, "the absence of

[22] For President William Few's desire to establish a medical school and hospital, see Ibid., 12, 19-21, 347-8.

[23] Janiewski, *Sisterhood Denied*, 69.

[24] Ibid., 74.

[25] Ibid., 116.

[26] Hiram Paul, quoted in Ibid., 80.

large commercial concerns with many office workers [made] Durham a town with a small middle class."[27]

Racial discrimination made the livelihoods of Durham's black working-class particularly tenuous. In tobacco, black men and women were limited to the dangerous and strenuous jobs preparing the tobacco plant for production.[28] Most of the textile and hosiery firms exclusively hired white workers, with the exception of two all-black mills that were opened in the early 20th century in the city and which employed perhaps five hundred black women.[29] The majority of black women in Durham had to rely on private domestic labor for their livelihoods.[30]

This was the place where Trinity College grew into Duke University. And it was where the new university's administrators sought answers to the emerging challenges of its growth and development. Among the most pressing of these challenges was how to make the grand new university complex work. Once built, new dorms, new facilities, and new wards had to be staffed. As the university continued to grow through the twentieth century, administrators were confronted with a burgeoning number of non-instructional staff roles, including in housekeeping, food service, and clerical work.

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[27] Hugh Brinton, "The Negro in Durham: A Study of Adjustment to Town Life" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1930), vi.

[28] See Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham*.

[29] Kathryn M. Silva, "African American Millhands, the Durham Hosiery Mills, and the Politics of Race and Gender in Durham's Textile Industry, 1903-1920," *North Carolina Historical Review* 94, no. 1 (Jan. 2017), 59.

[30] Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham*, 226.

In sheer numbers, service and clerical workers came to dominate the university's non-academic labor force.[31] As more and more students came to live on Duke's campus nine months out of the year, and hundreds of visitors traveled to Duke Hospital daily for medical care, the university had to expand its capacity to provide them with the material sustenance of life. In doing so, the University accepted the responsibility of housing and feeding its growing campus populations, gendered labors one might think of as the maternal side of the university's *in loco parentis*.[32] At the same time, the university's organizational structure grew larger and more complex as new departments were created and already established departments expanded. Compounding the management challenges of a growing university, faculty, doctors, and administrators increasingly sloughed off tasks they no longer wished to perform. In daily university life, these changes meant Duke's offices and corridors became filled with clerical workers tasked with meeting the institution's mushrooming record keeping and communication needs. Maids, janitors, cooks, cashiers, busboys, aides, stenographers, secretaries, punch card operators: these men and women performed the labor that made universities like Duke function.

For decades, the university had no formal personnel department or policies, and authority remained largely disbursed across the hospital, East Campus, and West Campus

[31] In the category of "service worker," I include all those who were engaged in the direct provision of personal service – predominantly the reproductive labors of cooking, cleaning, and caring for students, faculty, and patients. Though I do not include professional nursing personnel in this category, I do discuss the creation of the licensed practical nurse (LPN) position and its early grounding in administrators' views of personal care. I use the term "clerical worker" to refer to a wide (and growing) range of positions involved extensively in record-keeping labors, including stenographers, punch card operators, clerks, secretaries, and data terminal operators. I do not focus much on the university's maintenance workforce, though they do appear occasionally. This is because they did not represent nearly so large a contingent as the other two, and because there are almost no extant sources with which to reconstruct their experiences.

[32] For the history of in loco parentis as a disciplinary regime, see Rudolph, *The American College and University: A History*, 243; John C. Hogan and Mortimer D. Schwartz, "In Loco Parentis in the United States, 1765-1985," *The Journal of Legal History* 8, no. 3 (1987): 260-274.

into the 1960s. Yet, notwithstanding the decentralized nature of personnel decisions at Duke, university administrators pursued clear demographic preferences in building their non-academic workforce and explicitly sought to shape these employees' legal status as workers. The labor that those workers performed became important not just to the institution's economic bottom line but also to the story administrators told about higher education and medicine.

Like many other service institutions, Duke used gendered and racialized tropes to construct and justify relations of labor on campus. Administrators marshaled gendered rhetorical frameworks and appeals to family metaphors to shape both daily workplace interactions and the wage hierarchies that governed its increasingly bureaucratic structure. Clerical work at Duke in the first half of the century offered many white women consistent and respected positions that presented a respite from the dirty, taxing working-class jobs associated with the region's industrialization. These positions, however, usually carried low pay and few long-term opportunities for advancement and required women to serve as surrogate wives for powerful male faculty or administrators.

Yet, while administrators appealed to notions of white womanhood, the university's "public household" was more complex than the one described by scholars like Bethany Moreton.[33] The university also depended on black men and women in Durham to perform many specific (and low paying) service labors; labors which white members of the university community perceived black men and women particularly and constitutionally well-suited to

[33] See Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart: The Making of Christian Free Enterprise* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009). See also Polly Myers, *Capitalist Family Values: Gender, Work, and Corporate Culture at Boeing* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015); Tracey Deutsch, *Building a Housewife's Paradise: Gender, Politics, and American Grocery Stores in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

perform. Thus, the ideal household on which Duke was modeled was not itself a "private" retreat from the commercial world, but rather a public workplace in its own right.[34] And while white students and patients came to expect a particular "home-like" atmosphere, so too did many white employees. In particular, white women employees helped reinforce the scripts of a public household in their daily interactions with black workers at Duke. The new, modern economies of knowledge ultimately drew from and re-inscribed longstanding gendered and racial logics in ways that reinforced differences among poor southerners even as it recast them in new terms.

Duke administrators structured university labor relations around ideals of selfless nonprofit service, fantasies of virtuous white womanhood, and stereotypes of black servility in order to promote its growth and legitimacy during key moments of change. This history points to important inadequacies in the way historians of higher education have discussed two key issues: the "collegiate ideal" (an emphasis on providing a robust, wholesome, and character-building campus life) and the "rise of administrative bureaucracies."[35] Historians generally date these two transformations to the early twentieth century, when universities' social legitimacy was under threat. But beyond off-handed mentions of "janitorial" staff or

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[34] It thus more closely approximated the mixed space familiar to women's labor historians. See, for instance, Boris and Klein, *Caring for America*; Eileen Boris, *Home to Work: Motherhood and the Politics of Industrial Homework in the United States* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Elizabeth Clark-Lewis, *Living In, Living Out: African American Domestics in Washington, D.C., 1910-1940* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994); Rebecca Sharpless, *Cooking in Other Women's Kitchens: Domestic Workers in the South, 1865-1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

[35] For the emphasis on the "collegiate ideal" in the period, see Rudolph, *The American College and University*; Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University*; Arthur M. Cohen, *The Shaping of American Higher Education: Emergence and Growth of the Contemporary System* (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 1998), 120-122; and Steven Diner, *Universities and Their Cities: Urban Higher Education in America* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017). For administrative bureaucracies, see Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University;* Thelin, *A History of Higher Education*; Lucas, *American Higher Education: A History*; \Cohen, *The Shaping of American Higher Education*, 154.

gestures to when "typewriters appeared and typists began flooding" university corridors, they have failed to consider how these two processes transformed the makeup of the university community and, in particular, relations of gender, race, and class.[36] Duke's administrators took responsibility for providing the full complement of material comforts to students and patients through the creation of a profoundly racialized workforce whose presence fit into their particular vision of a "home-like" atmosphere. Similarly, "bureaucratization" at Duke was a process intricately tied up in claims of masculine authority and mediated through appeals to feminine virtue: Duke administrators "engendered the office" in much the same way that leaders of 19th century financial institutions had before them, hiring large numbers of white women to perform increasingly devalued clerical work.[37] Thus, far from natural or impersonal processes, the "collegiate ideal" and bureaucratization helped solidify the industry's status as economic anchors while embedding gendered and racialized conflicts into the project of higher education.

However, they could not do so in a vacuum. Administrators' visions of service and clerical work mapped imperfectly onto the aspirations of Duke's employees themselves. These employees understood their roles in the university community through the filter of their own varied experiences with race, gender, and status in Durham and at Duke. This disconnect, paired with what seemed constantly increasing demands, bedeviled administrators throughout the twentieth century. In particular, while many black service workers preferred the formal institutional setting at Duke over being subject to the

[36] Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University*, 268, 306.

[37] I draw here especially from Angel Kwolek-Folland, *Engendering Business: Men and Women in the Corporate Office, 1870-1930* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

vicissitudes of a mistress in a private home, they often chafed at the rules they were asked to follow in what they called "the big house" or sometimes simply "Dukes."[38] In the end, it was mostly these workers who forced the university to confront its history of labor exploitation. Over time, many of them came to resent and resist particular aspects of their laboring lives, driving the tensions embedded in the knowledge economy into public view through widespread collective action in the 1960s and 1970s. Ultimately, Duke's management only reluctantly, and often disingenuously, responded to employee demands for reform.

The experiences of these workers help deepen our understanding of race, gender, and liberalism in twentieth century labor history and in Southern labor history in particular. First, Duke's administrators, who eventually came from all over the nation, continued the legacy of earlier economic "modernizers." They continuously reinvented and reasserted existing social hierarchies in the context of new economic structures. Their eventual resistance to employee activism ultimately reveals in new ways the limits of 20th century liberalism. Second, as clerical workers at Duke, some working-class white women came to understand themselves as different from the university's black service workers by virtue of status, rather than by virtue of race. These feelings eventually led most of them to resist efforts at cooperation and coordination when black service workers organized beginning in the 1960s. Thus, this story of conflict among workers offers a new part of the history of how rapid economic changes helped cement an ostensibly color-blind rejection of labor liberalism.

On the other hand, the story of Duke's mostly black service workers revises further the once-standard narrative arc of twentieth century labor history which still tends to suggest

[38] See, among others, *Local 77 Newsletter*, clipping, Mar. 1975, Labor Unions Reference Collection, Duke University Archives; Leah Wise, "Stirring the Pot: Oliver Harvey's Narrative Account of the Struggle to Organize Duke University," (master's thesis, Duke University, 1980), 44. See Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham*, for discussion of black women preferring factory work for similar reasons.

a New Deal-era highwater mark and a collapse in the 1970s. For workers at Duke, the New Deal represented not the triumph of working-class power but the formalization of their disadvantaged status.[39] However, unlike the agricultural and domestic workers whose fates we know more about, the exclusion of nonprofit workers from New Deal protections rested on moral and ideological claims of institutional deservedness that shrouded their status as employees and obscured the racial and gendered implications of their exclusion. Nor were the 1960s and 1970s necessarily a period of declining fortunes for workers within the knowledge economy.[40] Their story reminds us of the complex way that the New Deal legal regime intersected with local conditions and culture to shape economic possibilities in American labor history.

Duke's nonacademic labor force was at the center of deep economic and social transformation on campus and in Durham. However, nonprofits like Duke and its hospital have remained largely outside the scope of historical inquiry in the fields of labor and economic history. For the most part, scholars have followed tax law in treating universities as

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[39] For treatments of the New Deal as the emergence of working-class power, see Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Nelson Lichtenstein, *State of the Union: A Century of American Labor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); and Jefferson Cowie, *The Great Exception: The New Deal and the Limits of American Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016). This remains particularly true of scholars who emphasize the restraint imposed on unions by Cold War politics. At the same time, the New Deal portion of the narrative has undergone the most significant revision, with many scholars emphasizing the limited reach of the New Deal. See, for instance, Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America* (New. York: W.W. Norton, 2005).

[40] See Jefferson Cowie, *Stayin' Alive: The 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class* (New York: New Press, 2010); and Judith Stein, *Running Steel, Running America: Race, Economic Policy, and the Decline of Liberalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998). Important exceptions to this include Lane Windham, Knocking on Labor's Door: U*nion Organizing in the 1970s and the Roots of a New Economic Divide* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017); Premilla Nadasen, *Household Workers Unite: The Untold Story of African-American Women Who Built a Movement* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2009); and Katherine Turk, *Equality on Trial: Gender and Rights in the Modern American Workplace* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

apart from and even above the commercial scrum.[41] Moreover, both supporters and critics of universities have characterized college campuses as liberal citadels, contributing to a widespread view of them as naturally benevolent and progressive institutions.[42] In contemporary culture, academics decry the "adjunctification" of their own work and graduate assistants across the nation seek to unionize, challenging the university's liberal reputation. However, even their arguments sometimes promote an idealized vision of the university's past labor practices.[43] Looking beyond these ideals of public service and nonprofit status demystifies the nature of work at institutions like Duke and reveals the long-term processes of conflict and change that shaped labor there.

In fact, the experiences of nonacademic workers at Duke suggest that historians have overemphasized the notion that "business" incursion in universities represents something new. Historians have long sought to understand the extent to which universities represented a unique sort of institution, with "business" serving as a useful, if always vaguely defined, foil. Though most scholars have ultimately acknowledged the presence of some elements of "a managerial culture" or a "'businesslike' tone" before World War II, they have generally contrasted that earlier period with the late twentieth century university's more self-

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[41] Peter Dobkin Hall, *Inventing the Nonprofit Sector* (Baltimore; Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992) offers a succinct primer on how tax laws and other legal structures have treated nonprofits as noncommercial entities. See also Olivier Zunz, *Philanthropy in America: A History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012). For a representative treatment in this vein by a historian, see Keller and Keller, *Making Harvard Modern*.

[42] See Francis Wilkinson, "Texas Professors Learn to Like Guns, or Else," *Tulsa World*, Aug. 18, 2016; Christi Parsons, "Obama Backers Ask: Where is Change?" *Daily Press*, Nov. 5, 2009; William Buckley, Jr., *God and Man at Yale: The Superstitions of "Academic Freedom* (Washington: Renery Gateway, 1986).
[43] See Joe Berry, *Reclaiming the Ivory Tower: Organizing Adjuncts to Change Higher Education* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2005); Marc Bousquet, *How the University Works: Higher Education and the Low-Wage Nation* (New York: New York University Press, 2008); and Benjamin Johnson et al., *Steal This University: The Rise of the Corporate University and the Academic Labor Movement* (New York: Routledge University Press, 2003).

consciously capitalist focus on "educational outputs."[44] The pioneer history of higher education, Lawrence Veysey encapsulated this thinking with the pithy phrase, "business means but not business ends."[45] However, these seemingly contradictory frameworks – business and nonprofit – actually worked together to shape the university as economic institution and indeed promote its growth in the early twentieth century, during a period of profound debate about working-class identity. Moreover, those "business means" profoundly affected the experiences of most workers in the knowledge economy, even if faculty were largely immune from such practices for decades.

By critically examining the notion of nonprofit exceptionalism, this history of labor at Duke ultimately seeks to suggest a more robust, integrated view of American capitalism. In a recent article reflecting on the resurgent interest in the subject, theorist Nancy Fraser argued that historians, philosophers, and activists need to incorporate an understanding of the nominally "non-marketized social relations which supply the background conditions of possibility" for capitalism's function as an "institutionalized social order."[46] To some observers, these arenas might appear to exist outside the structures of capitalist exploitation, or be at most only partially touched by them. Yet, Fraser argues that those very rhetorical distinctions – between labor and care, the economy and the environment, and between profit and nonprofit – have distorted the dependence of capital on supposedly non-marketized

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[44] Newfield, *Ivy and Industry*, 4; Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University*, 351. See also Allison Palmadessa, *American National Identity, Policy Paradigms, and Higher Education: A History of the Relationship between Higher Education and the United States, 1862-2015* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

[45] Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University*, 354.

[46] Nancy Fraser, "Behind Marx's Hidden Abode: For an Expanded Conception of Capitalism," *New Left Review* 86 (Mar/Apr 2014), 60, 66.

realms for its successful growth. By emphasizing those distinctions, institutions like Duke positioned themselves at the center of twentieth century economic development. As incubators of technological advancement and as anchor employers in their own right, nonprofit universities were foundational components of twentieth century American capitalism.

Thus, though Duke's employees labored within a nonprofit institution, their story helps chart the changes and continuities that have occurred as "capitalism has reorganized reproductive labor" –what scholar Evelyn Nagano Glenn famously called the transition "from servitude to service work."[47] For years, historians neglected this field of study, reflecting a longstanding discomfort with the meaning of service work. Many early theorists considered "servants" a relic of outmoded socio-economic systems – the last gasps of feudalism or the vanishing vestiges of slavery. On the other hand, critics of capitalism positioned service labor, and reproductive work more generally, as rooted in a more humane, natural, and organic relationship that operated as a bulwark against capitalism's ruthless advance. Though early theorists disagreed over the economic value of service labor, they agreed on one thing: whatever it was, service work was *not* a part or product of the new economic order. As service work became increasingly associated with women's domestic

[47] Evelyn Nakano Glenn, "From Servitude to Service Work: Historical Continuities in the Racial Division of Paid Reproductive Labor," *Signs* 18, no. 1 (1992), 3, 1. The literature on private domestic labor is relatively robust. See David Katzman, *Seven Days a Week: Women and Domestic Service in Industrializing America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); Phyllis Palmer, *Domesticity and Dirt: Housewives and Domestic Servants in the United States, 1920-1945* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989); Elizabeth Clark-Lewis, *Living In, Living Out: African American Domestics in Washington D.C., 1910-1940* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994); Susan Tucker, ed., *Telling Memories Among Southern Women: Domestic Workers and Their Employers in the Segregated South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1988); Thavolia Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

labor over the course of the nineteenth century, the view of service work as anachronistic, and by extension inherently degrading, grew stronger.[48]

Many practitioners of American labor history have imbibed that logic in ways that risk making the low-wage status of service work seem inevitable and natural, rather than historically conditioned. They have often positioned industrial "productive" labor as more central to the American political economy and more inherently given to radical activism. From the producerist viewpoint, the rise of service industries and the feminization of work that accompanied it led naturally and inexorably to an erosion in economic security and a crisis of masculinity.[49] As historian Thomas Adams has argued, such critiques of the postwar economic transformations have sometimes devolved into a dangerous nostalgia that "devalues, both culturally and economically, the 'traditional' work of women - work that is increasingly the central experience of the twenty-first century working class."[50]

A history of labor at Duke joins with recent scholarship in challenging this narrative, while treating higher education as a key element of twentieth century American capitalism. Tackling the histories of individual service professions, these works detailed how ideas of gender and race shaped service workforces and determined the relative respect accorded to

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[48] The above discussion of early theories of service under capitalism drawn from Thomas Jessen Adams, "The Servicing of America: Political Economy and Service Work in Postwar Southern California" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2009), 9-15. The notion that money corrupts care or service persists to this day, often making it difficult to advocate for better conditions for those who perform reproductive labor. See Eileen Boris and Jennifer Klein, *Caring for America: Home Health Workers in the Shadow of the Welfare State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 8.

[49] See, for instance, Stein, *Running Steel, Running America: Race, Economic Policy, and the Decline of Liberalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*.

[50] Thomas Jessen Adams, "Gender, The Wire, and the Limits of the Producerist Critique of Modern Political Economy," *Labor: Studies in Working-Class of the Americas* (2013), 30.

certain groups.[51] Likewise, Duke's administrators consciously constructed gendered and racialized labor hierarchies, facilitating the university's rise. These decisions combined with administrators' powerful rhetorical claims about a university's special status to identify nonprofit service labor as a separate sort of low-wage, emotionally-laden work. And when employees began actively resisting that status, they rose up not against the inherently degrading nature of service work, but rather against historically-specific relations of power and labor.

This dissertation is organized chronologically and thematically. Collectively, the first three chapters discuss the period roughly between 1930 and 1960, with different thematic emphases. Chapter one details the legal and political structures that allowed Duke University to develop into not just a 20th century model of 'higher education,' but also an anchor economic institution. At the launch of their new university campus, administrators confronted a major test to their ambitions in the figure of the New Deal state. The New Deal's proposed regulatory regime raised fundamental questions about Duke's status as an employer and threatened to reveal the invisible underpinnings of its daily existence. In answering these questions, administrators used the institution's position as a symbol of progress, advancement, and service to win important concessions and thereby guarantee its continued growth. Central to these efforts was a vision of these institutions as deserving protection from labor regulation; administrators' success in this regard thus structured the experiences of the university's employees for decades.

[51] Some examples include Boris and Klein, *Caring for America*; Kathleen Barry, *Femininity in Flight: A History of Flight Attendants* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Erin Hatton, *The Temp Economy: From Kelly Girls to Permatemps in Postwar America* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press, 2011). I also draw inspiration from a pioneer in this field, Susan Porter Benson, *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890-1940* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987).

Chapter two examines the experiences of workers who provided food, housekeeping, and care to the university's students and patients from around 1930 to 1960. Early in the century, Duke administrators and managers confronted students' and parents' concerns about the university's impersonality and rising costs by casting college and hospital social life in familiar and familial terms. The labor of black service workers was central to their vision of a "home-like" atmosphere. Duke's would be a household modeled after the middle-class Southern home, distinguished by the black servants who performed the intimate work necessary to sustain life. Over time, student preferences and employee discontent threatened this vision, while postwar expansion made it increasingly impractical. Still, Duke administrators, managers, and sometimes clients clung to these racialized frameworks for campus domestic labors, seeking new ways to blend modern business practices with older social scripts.

Chapter three continues the work of the previous chapter by examining the changing role of race and status in universities through the experiences of white female clerical workers at Duke. Their labor was essential to the growth and supposed rationalization of higher education, facilitating the new processes of record-keeping and communication necessary for the increasingly sprawling campus. Administrators, students, and patients also used these women's gendered whiteness in a variety of ways to advance the social legitimacy of the university project. However, in the postwar period, administrators grew concerned at the rising costs associated with clerical labor and what they perceived as a lost connection between clerical employees and the university. On the other hand, many clerical workers felt their relative status declining. Each seeking their own resolution to what appeared as a

significant challenge, administrators and employees used symbols of gendered whiteness to resituate clerical work in a changing university.

Chapter four serves in some ways as a bridge chapter, covering 1930 to 1965. It outlines the long-term geographic consequences of Duke's status as an employer, while showing how those spatial relations foreshadowed and even hastened the outbreak of labor conflict. This chapter traces the way that Duke's employment and land-use policies reshaped the city of Durham in the university's own image. The university helped create or exacerbate racialized communities with shared experiences of class, including racially restricted faculty enclaves and respectable, middle-class neighborhoods for their clerical and technical employees. On the other hand, Duke tapped into black Durham's kin- and community-based hiring patterns, but offered these employees no protections from the segregated and exploitative housing patterns in the city, with wages too low to change their fortunes. Eventually, these divergent experiences sharpened tensions among campus employees. Black service workers who lived and worked alongside one another developed shared working-class cultures that situated them as a class beholden to but also against Duke. Their critiques of Duke found fuller expression in the campus labor conflicts of the 1960s, discussed in chapter five.

Chapters five and six discuss those campus labor conflicts in the 1960s and 1970s, respectively. Chapter five argues that the formalization of a system of "modern" personnel relations at Duke came about only as a result of Duke's black, low-wage service workers' increasing dissatisfaction with their labor conditions. By the 1960s, these workers began to draw on previously-cultivated community resources, as well as changing national and local political conditions to press for significant changes. These workers won some relief through

collective action, but their efforts did not transform the domineering and racially hierarchical administrative structure.

Chapter six picks up the story of this struggle in the 1970s, as a series of union organizing drives at the hospital and university propelled a profound crisis in Duke's labor structure. Employee organizing efforts met mixed results. University administrators and state officials marshalled the public's ambivalent response to these drives to halt, and even sometimes roll back, economic and social advancement. But, even when their formal elections failed, employees' activism on campuses like Duke called into question some of the very foundational conceits of the higher education system in America – namely the meanings of service and profit and the supposedly peripheral nature of nonacademic workers to the knowledge economy.

The epilogue uses the figure of Terry Sanford, Governor of North Carolina from 1961 to 1965 and Duke University President in the 1970s, to reflect on the limits of institutional liberalism in the period. Though a liberal southern Democrat, Sanford's position at Duke put him on a crash course with many people who once might have thought of him as an ally.

Administrators rarely relished the university's emerging status as a major employer of service and clerical work. They nevertheless decided that such work needed to be done, and voiced clear and persistent ideas about who should do it, at what price, and why. In the process, they constructed a nonacademic workforce strongly defined by racial and gendered stereotypes and hierarchies. But, from the first, that system was met with a mixture of acceptance and challenge from the men and women who went to work at Duke, who sometimes revised, rejected, or adapted the status bestowed upon them. This story tells of a process of evolving conflict and negotiation over what sort of employer Duke was, or should

be. The legal aspect of that process began, at the moment of Duke's launch, with the rise of the New Deal state.

CHAPTER 1: A NEW UNIVERSITY, A NEW DEAL: DUKE AND THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF HIGHER EDUCATION, 1924-1960

September 24, 1930 was a momentous day in Durham. Six years prior, William Few, the President of local Trinity College, had secured a monumental, $40 million gift from James Duke, architect of a local tobacco and energy fortune.[1] Under Few's stewardship, the gift promised to transform his corner of the world. His small, regional college had become the grand, research institution Duke University, renamed after its new benefactor's father. And now, sheltered from the late summer heat in a just-dedicated auditorium, Few stood before an eager crowd and welcomed the first swell of students to their "splendid" new campus.[2]

In smaller gatherings as he prepared for the 1930 commencement, Few seemed to revel in predicting the impressive future ahead for the new university. The Hospital that he had long sought, and which Duke's gift finally made a reality, would, he said, be the "Greatest in the World."[3] What is more, "enlightened citizens" would soon recognize the university as "among the best in the world."[4] This gift would make the new Duke University, almost overnight, one of the nation's premier institutions of higher education.

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[1] See Robert Durden, *The Launching of Duke University, 1924-1949* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1993).

[2] "Duke University Quickly Adjusts Itself to Its New Home," *The Alumni Register*, Oct. 1930, 327.

[3] "Duke's Hospital Will Rank First in the World – President Few Predicts that Duke Hospital will be Greatest in World," *The Duke Chronicle*, Nov. 9, 1927.

[4] William Few, "Some Illustrations of the Importance of Duke University to the City of Durham," address before the Rotary Club, Sept. 29, 1930, Box 113, William Preston Few Records and Papers, Duke University Archives [Hereafter DU Archives].

But on commencement day itself, Few struck a more sobering tone. He vaguely warned of the great "financial" and "moral" challenges ahead.[5] Indeed, while the $20 million construction project was a resounding success, the university's long-term prospects were hardly assured. After all, Duke aspired to be the premiere educational institution of the South, but to do that it had also to be a new kind of employer. A great university would need people to clean the dorms, to feed the students and patients, to type the reports, and to file the student and medical records.[6] That project would prove more challenging than Few had anticipated because of the new context to which he alluded.

In the time between James Duke's gift in 1924 and the campus's launch six years later, the nation's economy and political culture had changed. A mere year before the 1930 commencement, $30 billion in paper wealth was erased in one fell swoop as the stock market crashed, hastening a global economic crisis that lasted over a decade and occasioned a radical rethinking of the role of the state in American life and labor relations.[7] President Few's concerns would only grow as President Franklin Roosevelt swept into office on the promise of "a new deal for the American people."[8] Working within a network of like-minded educational leaders, Duke's leadership sought to confront these new economic and political

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[5] Quoted in "Duke University Quickly Adjusts Itself to Its New Home," *The Alumni Register*, Oct. 1930, 327.

[6] Historians of higher education have largely neglected the growing importance of these institutions as employers and overlooked the legal and social edifices on which that importance came to rest. Most histories of higher education ignore entirely the presence of non-academic employees on campuses. There are a few notable exceptions, most of which focused on important unionization drives among such staff in the 1960s and 1970s. See introduction.

[7] For the history of the Great Depression's impact on thinking about political economy, see Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995).

[8] For the rhetorical power of Roosevelt's campaign, despite an absence of specifics, see Donald A. Ritchie, *Electing FDR: The New Deal Campaign of 1932* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2007).

challenges. The outcome of these efforts fundamentally shaped not just Duke's future as a national academic empire but also, and inextricably, as an employer.

University leaders like Few sought to secure a piece of the expanding New Deal welfare state but strenuously resisted its oversight. To do so, they promoted a powerful vision of the private university and hospital that secured such institutions a privileged legal and social status. These institutions, Duke administrators and others argued, were public charities that served a "public good," and were essential to the working of American democracy. As such, colleges and universities were at once worthy recipients of government largesse and *necessarily* exempted from government regulation over their labor policies. For a variety of political and ideological reasons, government administrators and members of congress eventually agreed, offering institutions like Duke influxes of capital while granting them decades-long exemptions from the labor protections so central to New Deal reform.

The relationship of universities like Duke to the New Deal order reveals new facets to longstanding debates about the political economy of the twentieth century. Duke's history emphasizes the importance of midcentury Keynesian economic policies on higher education and explains in new dimensions the limitations of the New Deal's regulatory revolution. Much of the scholarship of the 'New Deal order' examines the dialectic relationship between its economic and social programs and the industrial working class, focusing on the Roosevelt administration's efforts to elevate that segment of the American public into relative security and prosperity.[9] The New Deal also had a profound and more varied impact on workers in

[9] For a good survey of the contours of the debate about the New Deal, much of which revolves around the relative radicalism of its reform efforts and the public's appetite for liberalism, see the roundtable on Jefferson Cowie and Nick Salvatore's "The Long Exception." Jefferson Cowie et al. "Scholarly Controversy: Rethinking the Place of the New Deal in American History," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 74 (Fall 2008): 3-69. For other works on New Deal policies and their impact on the industrial working class, see Cohen, *Making a New Deal*; and Brinkley, *The End of Reform.*

other sectors of the economy, like agriculture, domestic labor, and services.[10] Yet, almost no attention has been paid to how the New Deal order influenced supposedly ancillary sectors like nonprofit universities and hospitals, even though these institutions were, at the very same time, becoming paradigmatic examples of a high-tech, post-industrial America.[11]

Scholars have generally underestimated the extent to which the New Deal order transformed higher education, emphasizing the limited and "indirect" nature of federal subsidies.[12] However, institutions of higher education also received invaluable protections from regulation as employers. While federal funds inflated the coffers of Duke and other universities, exclusions from labor regulation artificially depressed their expenditures on wages. What is more, university officials' success in establishing this special status profoundly shaped the work experiences and opportunities of the growing number of

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[10] Historians and political scientists have now established the role of Southern legislators in excluding agricultural and domestic workers who were disproportionately African Americans, from New Deal protections and limiting the effectiveness of those policies altogether in the postwar period. Ira Katznelson has called this the "Southern cage." Katznelson, *Fear Itself: The New Deal and the Origins of Our Time* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2013). For the impact of the New Deal on men and women in agriculture and domestic labor, see Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005); Mary Poole, *Segregated Origins of Social Security: African Americans and the Welfare State* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); and Suzanne Mettler, "Federalism, Gender, and the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938," *Polity* 26, no. 4 (July 1994): 635-654.

[11] Economist Victor Fuchs noted as early as 1968 that "the large corporation is likely to be overshadowed by the hospitals, universities, research institutes, government agencies, and professional organizations that are the hallmarks of a service economy." Fuchs, *The Service Economy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 10.

[12] See Elizabeth Tandy Shermer, "A Fraught Partnership: Business and the Public University Since the Second World War," in *Capital Gains: Business and Politics in Twentieth-Century America*, eds Richard John and Kim Phillips-Fein (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017). Emphasizing the Roosevelt administration's failure to elevate the Department of Education to a cabinet position, Hugh Hawkins largely agreed. Hawkins, *Banding Together: The Rise of National Associations in Higher Education, 1887-1950* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992). Ronald Story and LaDale Winling have begun to challenge this narrative. However, while I too note the impact of student-aid and construction, I shift the focus to consider the special privileges received by those institutions as well. Story, "The New Deal and Higher Education," in *The New Deal and the Triumph of Liberalism*, eds. Sidney M. Milkis and Jerome M. Mileur (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002); Winling, *Building the Ivory Tower: Universities and Metropolitan Development in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018).

employees hired to work in the service of knowledge, structuring the content of their work, the value of their labor, and their opportunities for self-governance. The racial dynamics that structured many institutions like Duke – enrollments and professional employment was restricted to whites, while many of its service staff was black – meant that New Deal policy ensured that white opportunity continued to be wrung in part from the labor of African Americans.

Despite the far-reaching consequences of these processes for employees, it was administrators and not workers whose views on policy were loudest and most powerful. This asymmetry almost certainly reflects some manner of archival distortion, but is also a testament to the influence of education lobbies, the relatively unorganized condition of these employees, and their broader status as racialized and gendered laborers. At Duke, an even more narrow cadre of administrators dominated the discussion: William Few, who was President from 1910 to 1940, his Vice-President and eventual successor, Robert Flowers, and the university's postwar president, Hollis Edens. But while Duke's workers rarely had the power to affect debates about New Deal policy, the social and legal frameworks that emerged from this period fundamentally shaped the context within which they labored, and the strictures from which they would ultimately seek to break.

Universities and New Deal Economic Stimulus: Private Institutions, Public Good

Neither James Duke nor President Few could have anticipated at the time of Duke's gift the terrible economic changes poised to foil their plans. But Few undoubtedly recognized them as he dedicated the new campus in 1930. And over the course of the subsequent decade, he and a cohort of private college administrators and educational leaders fought to manage and restrain not just the economic crisis itself, but also, and especially, the federal response to

that crisis. Duke administrators and their colleagues across higher education eventually succeeded in meeting the challenges of the New Deal state, turning possible disaster into privilege. They did so by repackaging themselves as a special sort of institution and employer. Ultimately, they would marshal these same arguments in efforts to prevent federal oversight of their labor policies, including the wages of their growing nonacademic staff and those employees' rights to form unions. Duke administrators' response to the challenges of the New Deal thus helped promote ideas and legal arguments that ensured both continued growth and the favorable employment conditions which sustained that growth.

To be sure, private universities and nonprofit hospitals had long enjoyed certain legal and social privileges. Though mostly recalled for establishing the rights of private corporations, the *Dartmouth College v. Woodward* case in 1819 was closely watched at the time for its impact on the legal status of "private" colleges. In fact, representatives from other colleges reportedly filled the audience as Supreme Court Justice John Marshall issued a ruling affirming the independence of the state-chartered and sometimes state-supported Dartmouth College.[13] Prior to this ruling, little distinction was made between "private" and "public" institutions.[14] So, while historians of education continue to debate the scope of its

[13] The *Dartmouth* ruling has become central to the history of American business because of the court's ruling on the legal protections afforded private corporate charters. Dartmouth's standing as an eleemosynary institution was not significant to the ruling. However, it obviously set important precedent for private nonprofit as well as private for-profit corporations. See Mordecai Lee, "Revisiting the Dartmouth Court Decision: Why the US has Private Nonprofit Agencies Instead of Public Non-Governmental Organizations," *Public Organization Review* 7, no. 2 (June 2007): 113-142; Elizabeth Brand Monroe, "The Influence of the Dartmouth College Case on the American Law of Educational Charities," *Journal of Supreme Court History* 32, no. 1 (2007): 1-21. Note about the attendance of representatives from other colleges in Monroe, page 3.

[14] Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University: A History* (New York: Knopf, 1962), 210.

immediate impact, the Dartmouth ruling certainly established precedent for the *legally private* nonprofit sector in the United States free of government intervention.[15]

Yet, if the *Dartmouth* case hardened the distinction between private and public on the issue of governance, many Americans remained amenable to the idea that private institutions could serve a public purpose and even that a "mix of private and public resources" could be used to achieve that purpose.[16] Despite what one historian called a "general tendency to prohibit the appropriation of public moneys to enterprises under private control," the latter half of the century saw a partial revival of this thinking and a slowly expanding scope of government support.[17] In large measure, this attitude drove tax policy, an indirect but essential element of government provision for private nonprofits.[18] Before the late 19th century, most taxes were levied by state and local authorities on real property. Though the legal privileges varied by state and the designation could be hard to secure, most states followed English common law in granting charitable institutions exemption from such taxes.[19] The 19th century saw these exemptions expanded and the requirements for exempt

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[15] According to Peter Dobkin Hall, the legal status of eleemosynary corporations remained unsettled and uneven across states even after the *Dartmouth* ruling. It was not until the end of the 19th century, he claims, that the financial incentives to distinguish between for-profit and nonprofit corporate forms became more substantive. Peter Dobkin Hall, *Inventing the Nonprofit Sector* (Baltimore; Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 30-1.
[16] Bernard Bailyn, *Education in the Forming of American Society: Needs and Opportunities for Study* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960), 11.

[17] Edward Elliott and M.M. Chambers, *Colleges and the Courts: Judicial Decisions Regarding Institutions of Higher Education in the United States* (New York: Merrymount Press, 1936), 285.

[18] For discussion for some moments when the public questioned the validity of private charity, see Peter Dobkin Hall, "Historical Perspectives on Nonprofit Organizations in the United States," in David O. Renz and Robert D. Herman, eds., *The Jossey-Bass Handbook of Nonprofit Leadership and Management* (Hoboken: Jossey-Bass, 2016), 7-9.

[19] At the time, these were almost exclusively religious organizations. This exemption was retained and expanded upon during the early national period. See Howard S. Miller, *Legal Foundations of American Philanthropy, 1776-1844* 1 (Madison: University of Wisconsin 1961). See Norman I. Silber, *A Corporate Form of Freedom: The Emergence of the Nonprofit Sector* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2001) on the discretionary power of judges in awarding "charitable" charters.

status liberalized.[20] Moreover, with the Tariff Act of 1894, the federal government embraced charitable exemptions, formally extending them to educational institutions. When the Revenue Act of 1913 established the modern federal income tax system, the law included the same exemptions. In 1917, new tax preferences granting deductions for charitable contributions encouraged nonprofit giving.[21] Thus, nonprofit educational institutions like Duke felt well assured of both their independence and their tax privilege by the early 20th century. While the former rested on their "private" status, the latter relied on a persistent notion that these institutions worked for the "public" good.

Despite this favorable legal context, the interwar period presented significantly new challenges to colleges and universities seeking to ensure their own long-term growth and security, challenges that historians have largely overlooked. In their pursuit of economic recovery and reform, federal and state New Dealers began to raise, albeit sometimes implicitly, questions both about what the state could offer institutions of higher education and also what it could demand of them. Duke's leadership, like that of many other private colleges and universities, sought to encourage some of those impulses and restrain others. In so doing, they built on earlier traditions of nonprofit exemption to consolidate and extend certain social and legal privileges that eventually ensured the private college or university a central place in the twentieth century economic and social landscape.

To a certain extent, college administrators like Duke's President Few found opportunity in the New Deal's funding programs. Historians have shown that the New Deal was an experimental patchwork of programs, an "alphabet soup" without one clear

[20] See Silber, *A Corporate Form of Freedom*.

[21] "Olivier Zunz, *Philanthropy in America: A History (Princeton: Princeton University Press*, 2012), 88.

ideological framework.[22] That being said, the Roosevelt administration's spending generally sought to put money into the hands of average Americans. However, while Roosevelt eschewed Hoover's stubborn ideological commitment to associationism, neither did he favor direct payments to citizens. The New Deal's relief programs – the Civilian Conservation Corps [CCC], the Public Works Administration [PWA], the Works Progress Administration [WPA], the Federal Emergency Relief Act [FERA], and the National Youth Administration [NYA] among others – thus worked to stimulate the economy largely through job creation and grants to state and local governments for the same. But while historian Hugh Hawkins is right to note that the New Deal placed a "low priority [on] educational matters," several federal programs in fact aided middle-class institutions like higher education.[23]

Duke itself benefited from a variety of federal programs. For instance, the university managed to get some recipients of New Deal work relief assigned to work on campus, repairing homes owned by the university and maintaining Duke Forest.[24] Over several years, FERA and the NYA also provided funds to college students for part-time work, and Duke administrators promptly and consistently enrolled in these programs.[25] Before the influx of FERA money especially, students at Duke who needed to earn outside income resorted to many of the schemes pioneered by earlier "self-help" students, including milking cows, working as barbers, shoemakers, furnace firers, clerks, agents, and waiters.[26] FERA and NYA

[22] On the New Deal's experimental and perhaps even haphazard nature, see Brinkley, *The End of Reform*.

[23] Hawkins, *Banding Together*, 130.

[24] C.F. Korstian to Flowers, Mar. 21, 1933, Box 8, Robert Lee Flowers Records, DU Archives.

[25] These programs were discontinued in 1943. A permanent system of federally funded work-study grants would not develop for several decades. See Christopher Loss, *Between Citizens and the State: The Politics of American Higher Education in the 20th century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 53-90.

[26] Charles Markham, Treasurer, to Mr. J.S. Bennet, Supervisor of Operations, University of North Carolina,

funds allowed Duke administrators to guarantee many of their students a modest income as well as redirect their labors in support of the institution itself. Instead of working in the Durham community, they were employed in academic departments, on infrastructure projects, in clerical labor, and in the student union.[27] Students were warning university deans that they were "doubting their ability continue" at Duke, and this aid proved essential to maintaining Duke's enrollments.[28] President Few called the program "profitable both to the University and the students" when he communicated the university's pleasure to George Zook, then Commissioner of Education, in 1934 and pressed Zook to continue them.[29]

These short-term programs undoubtedly aided students, but they also served as a small but essential injection of capital into struggling university departments. They also awakened some university leaders to the value of student labor. One faculty member, Walter Seeley, described the program as "a God-send" because it allowed him to employ "boys on work that almost amounts to janitor work, and yet it is of such a nature that a janitor cannot be entrusted with it."[30] Self-help students had long worked in the university's cafeterias, but faculty and administrative experience with the NYA helped prime them to think of students as cheap, captive alternatives to less trustworthy nonacademic labor. While Seeley noted "of

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Feb. 14, 1940, Box 1, Office of the Treasurer Records, DU Archives. College education remained a rarified world in the early twentieth century. Still, many college students came from the middling classes, and the effects of the Depression on their family circumstances often severely constrained their capacity to continue in school. David O. Levine, *The American College and the Culture of Aspiration, 1915-1940* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 185-209.

[27] See folder on the National Youth Administration, Box 1, Office of the Bursar Records, DU Archives; and Federal Emergency Relief Administration folder, Box 127, Few Records.

[28] A.M. Baldwin, Dean of Women, to Robert Flowers, Vice President, Dec. 24, 1929, Box 8, Flowers Records.

[29] Few to George Zook, Commissioner of Education, May 24, 1934, Box 127, Few Records.

[30] Walter Seeley, Professor, to Flowers, Apr. 5, 1935, Box 8, Flowers Records.

course, the value to the departments concerned," he also took great pains to paint the program as mutually beneficial, claiming, perhaps unconvincingly, that many students worked beyond their required hours because it gave them "the feeling that they are self-supporting and not subjects of charity."[31] Thus convinced of the psychological benefit that these students received from their labors, he advocated requiring "all undergraduate recipients of scholarships at Duke University to furnish 30 hours per month" to the University instead of "giving away tuition for nothing."[32] Critics of New Deal redistributive programs frequently accused them of undermining the capitalist work ethic, but Duke's experiences with student aid reveals that they also sometimes institutionalized and legitimated a trend towards work-dependent aid. Though accounting for only a small portion of Duke's budget, FERA and NYA not only subsidized university enrollments but also offered the added benefit of low-wage, captive labor to the institution.

Though vitally important for individual students and departments needing to pinch every penny, the funding provided by FERA and NYA was relatively minor when compared to other government programs benefiting higher education. Most significantly, the federal government opened a major flow of capital to institutions of higher learning through construction loans and a variety of other granting programs.[33] One historian has found that government-subsidized construction through the PWA and WPA on college and university campuses accounted for a full one-sixth of the total construction during the New Deal Era.[34]

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[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

[33] See Story, "The New Deal and Higher Education;" and Winling, *Building the Ivory Tower*.

[34] Winling, *Building the Ivory Tower*, 4. Though a full accounting of the funding received by Duke from New Deal agencies is not available, the hospital used Federal Works Administration to build a nurse's dormitory.

Though many government administrators remained ambivalent about federal funding for private educational institutions, the New Deal helped ensure not just that colleges and universities would survive, but that they would continue to grow amidst economic turmoil.[35] These programs provided a desperately needed financial safety net for institutions like Duke while bolstering their cultural and physical prominence.

Despite some resistance within the ranks of national educational leaders, Duke's president Few joined with other like-minded colleagues to argue for the essential legitimacy of providing state funds to private, nonprofit educational institutions.[36] In fact, Duke and other privately endowed colleges and Universities initially feared, with reason, that they would be left out of the New Deal windfall in favor of public schools. New Deal agencies like the Reconstruction Finance Corporation [RFC], the Public Works Administration [PWA] and FERA originally limited funding to public institutions. When administrators of private colleges like President Few suggested that the "Recovery program [should] be so amended […] as to cure this defect," Dr. Mann of the American Council on Education cautioned patience and warned that "there is a very strong prejudice against certain private institutions because they are considered to be 'capitalistic.'"[37] It was only due to the collective efforts of

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Wilburt Davison, *The First Twenty Years: A History of the Duke University Schools of Medicine, Nursing and Health Services, and Duke Hospital* (Durham: Duke University, 1952), 7.

[35] See Hawkins, *Banding Together*; Shermer, "A Fraught Partnership;" Paula Fass, "Without Design: Education Policy in the New Deal," *American Journal of Education* 91, no. 1 (Nov. 1982), 45.

[36] Princeton's president Harold Dodds warned of the "dangerous political influence and administrative control" that would arise as a consequence of continued federal investment. Harvard's Conant likewise feared the impact of "federal control" on private philanthropy. Others like the president of MIT were more sanguine. Dodds and Conant became even more of a minority over time. By 1946, 89 percent of polled colleges argued that federal aid to higher education was "both necessary and desirable." See Hawkins, *Banding Together*, 170.

[37] When Dr. Few posed that question, he claimed he was "not personally interested in the matter." Few to Dr. C.R. Mann, American Council on Education, Jan. 1, 1934 and Mann to Few, Jan. 3, 1934, Box 70, Few Records.

universities and educational associations that skeptics in government agencies were convinced to extend new federal benefits to the private educational sphere.[38]

Recognizing that the emerging welfare state was transforming the economic and cultural context, President Few expounded a particular vision of private colleges and universities that resonated with the leaders of similarly situated institutions and charted a course for expanded government aid. In letters to his colleagues and New Deal leaders, Few argued that "*so-called* private and *so-called* public institutions should be treated alike in all emergency funds."[39] Beyond his efforts to secure favorable treatment from New Deal programs, Few muddled the distinction between public and private institutions in ways that pointed to a broader reframing of those distinctions. "I have all my life," he said, "been opposed to defining colleges as private and public. All of them seem to me to be public whether they are supported by philanthropy or by the direct taxes of the people" because "all good colleges are public institutions."[40] Emerging from within the particular New Deal maelstrom of opportunity and threat, Few's defense of privately endowed colleges and universities would also be used to justify greater public consideration of their needs in the future. Indeed, continued federal largesse provided vital lifelines for private universities like Duke into the postwar period, expanding their economic footprints and ultimately subsidizing their status as major employers.

Few thus drew Duke into an emerging consensus within higher education circles that questioned the "so-called" differences between public and private that put private colleges

[38] The associations were particularly effective in this endeavor, particularly through ACE's 'NRA Committee.' See Hawkins, *Banding Together*.

[39] Few to Robert Kelley, Feb. 21, 1934, Box 70, Few Records.

[40] Few to Mann, Jan. 1, 1934 and Few to Kelley, Feb. 21, 1934, Box 70, Few Records.

and universities at a disadvantage.[41] Robert L. Kelley, the Executive Secretary of the Association of American Colleges likewise argued that "so-called private colleges are really public institutions carried on as nonprofit corporations operated for public benefit."[42] Many of the privileges of independence originally afforded private colleges through the *Dartmouth* decision depended on a sharp legal distinction between public and private. Now, private college and university administrators like Few sought to elide the social distinction between public and private institutions without, presumably, disavowing *Dartmouth* altogether and legally becoming public institutions. The notion that nonprofit educational institutions like Duke provided a public good was not altogether new. However, federal funding policies during the New Deal further legitimated that idea, making it the foundation for a regime of state subsidy of private higher education.

University Employees and New Deal Labor Law: The NRA, the FLSA, and Social Security

This vision of institutions of higher education became increasingly important in light of the threat posed by the other lever of the New Deal state: labor regulation. Historians who have focused primarily on the limited amount of direct funding that the New Deal offered universities have mistakenly downplayed the legacy of this period of accommodation. Federal support, however indirect, was essential to the growth of universities in the twentieth century, especially as its scope increased precipitously in the postwar period. But it was that support, *paired* with the protections universities received from regulation, that ensured the

[41] For longer struggle between private and state-supported institutions, see Hawkins, *Banding Together*.

[42] Quoted in Hawkins, *Banding Together*, 129.

continued development of the sector and shaped the landscape of labor therein. Many New Deal leaders, after all, hoped to regulate as much as to subsidize the American economy.

Duke president Few and his colleagues realized that downplaying the distinctions between private and public institutions might not just guarantee universities like Duke access to New Deal federal subsidies, it also might offer protection against government intervention into their affairs. Though always more reformist than radical, many New Deal policy-makers responded to the perceived failures of capitalism by seeking to rebalance the relationship between workers and employers.[43] The National Industrial Relations Act [NRA], the most controversial of the early wave of New Deal policies, encouraged leaders of various industries to voluntarily establish codes of fair competition, maximum hours and minimum wages. It also guaranteed the right of workers to form unions. After those elements of the law were declared unconstitutional in 1935, the New Deal Congress responded by passing new laws that provided a federally-guaranteed right to unionize to industrial workers (The National Labor Relations Act, or the Wagner Act, of 1935), established and then expanded upon a system of old-age and unemployment insurance (the Social Security Act, first passed in 1935), and guaranteed minimum wages and maximum hours for certain workers (the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938). Taken together, this series of laws represented the Roosevelt administration's broadest attempts to build a social safety net and reform labor-management relations.

For Few, they also represented the biggest threats to the university. Duke University was in the midst of a crucial period in its development, which required transforming itself

[43] Brinkley, *The End of Reform*; Cohen, *Making a New Deal*; Steve Fraser, "The 'Labor Question,'" in *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980,* eds., Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989): 55-84.

into a major employer, and these proposed policies might derail its ambitions entirely. For years, he and other educational leaders across the country scrambled for legal clarification as to the application of these new programs for wage protections, unemployment insurance, social security, and collective bargaining to private, nonprofit institutions of higher learning. To be sure, public and private colleges alike looked warily upon these regulatory impulses.[44] However, the legal distinctions between public and private institutions that Few and others tried to obscure still carried weight for many within the federal government. So, while most members of Congress quickly established that government agencies would remain outside the bounds of these laws, they left private institutions with more reason for uncertainty. Further, as a private university with an associated hospital, Duke's status was particularly ambiguous, as legislators and administration officials usually discussed the status of hospitals vis-a-vis New Deal legislation separately of educational institutions.

College and university administrators were deeply fearful of the NRA. And, while short-lived, the controversy over the legislation offers an important corrective to the teleology of nonprofit exception and foreshadows later university strategies when dealing with the New Deal state. Duke Vice President Robert Flowers struck a positive tone when he asserted in late 1933 that "it is my impression that the Government never really intended that charitable and educational institutions were to be included" under the industry codes of the NRA.[45] His confidence, however, appears rather misplaced, if not disingenuous. Though "public institutions" were always exempt from the provisions of the NRA, many New Deal

[44] See Hawkins, *Banding Together*, 124-138.

[45] Flowers to Colonel John Bruton, Chair, Duke University Board of Directors, Aug. 31, 1933, Box 8, Flowers Records. Flowers later became president of the university, serving in that capacity from 1941 to 1948. Colonel Bruton served as chair of the Board from 1912 to 1946.

leaders initially argued that "hospitals and eleemosynary institutions such as universities do not come under the head of public institutions" and declined to extend the exemption to them.[46] Even as Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes signaled his willingness to avoid "discrimination as between types of institutions," NRA Executive Director General Thomas Hammond continued to favor upholding a distinction between "'the tax-supported institutions'" and other educational facilities.[47] Moreover, on the question of hospitals, he remained skeptical of their pleas that limiting the workweeks of janitorial staff "would work a hardship on the hospitals."[48] NRA administrator General Hugh Johnson maintained that "the term 'public institution' as used in the act refers to those institutions which are entirely supported by public taxes."[49] Such conflicting interpretations of the law offered by New Deal leaders like Ickes, Hammond, and Johnson contributed to the overall sense of confusion among private university administrators but they do not suggest, as Flowers hoped, a consensus on exemption. Moreover, nonprofits did come under some states' minimum wage laws at the time.[50] In fact, then, labor regulation of nonprofits was a distinct possibility in the early days of the New Deal.

In facing that challenge, private university administrators mounted a robust defense of their institutions which rested primarily on their supposed public service and charitable

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[46] Frank A. Pierson, Secretary, Durham Chamber of Commerce, to Flowers, Aug. 16, 1933, Box 15, Flowers Records.

[47] Office Secretary, Association of American Colleges, Aug. 7, 1933, Confidential, Box 15, Flowers Records.

[48] Quoted in Bert Caldwell, Executive Secretary, American Hospital Association, to All Members of the American Hospital Association, July 31, 1933, Box 8, Flowers Records.

[49] Quoted in Pierson to Flowers, Aug. 16, 1933.

[50] Linzy Brekke, "Fair Harvard? Labor, Law, and Gender in the Harvard Scrubwoman Case 1921-1931," in *Yards and Gates: Gender in Harvard and Radcliffe History*, ed. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 159-170.

function. When initially told in early 1933 that private nonprofit hospitals would be subject to the provisions of the law, Duke administrators argued that "an effort to increase the wage of [the hospital's] employees or by shortening the hours of servitude" would unduly tax the hospital's budget, "limiting its ability to do charity."[51] This argument must have overcome Hammond's resistance, because he shortly ruled that "hospitals not engaged in carrying on a trade or industry" would be exempt.[52] On the college side, Duke's leadership continued to declare its function as a "public charity" with a "field of […] influence […] possibly broader than many State Universities."[53] When leaders of the college and university associations finally won an emergency committee ruling in March of 1934, the Executive Director of the AAC took it as evidence that the government agreed with "the contention that most privately-controlled, non-profit making colleges are public institutions."[54] For Duke administrators and lawyers, the university's public function ought to ensure it public support while its nonprofit status ought to protect it from public oversight. Whatever the intention of the NRA administrators in the ruling, college administrators were able to use it as precedent to restrain New Deal efforts at regulating their practices as employers.

After the wage codes of the NRA were struck down, the Roosevelt administration proposed new legislation a few years later. The resulting law, the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, established minimum wages and maximum hours for employees engaged in

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[51] Thaddeus Bryson, Professor of Law, Legal Opinion on application of NRA to Duke, n.d., Box 34, Flowers Records.

[52] Maynard O. Fletcher, Secretary-Treasurer, North Carolina Hospital Association to Duke Hospital, Aug. 26, 1933, Box 15, Flowers Records.

[53] Bryson, Legal Opinion.

[54] Kelley to Members of the Association, Mar. 7, 1934, Box 70, Few Records.

"commerce or in the production of goods for commerce."[55] Though the status of nonprofit employees was never substantively debated, later administrative rulings clarified that they were not included. Ironically, their exclusion was not due to their identity as "public institutions" as Kelley claimed above, but resulted from the law's grounding in the Interstate Commerce Clause of the Constitution and the explicit exclusion of "any retail or service establishment" mostly engaged in intrastate commerce. The FLSA thus recycled the NRA administrator's earlier logic that hospitals and universities did not engage in commerce, and likewise excluded employees of

such institutions from the labor protections established by the New Deal.

Notwithstanding the FLSA success, Duke President Few and other higher education administrators faced another worrying prospect in the second half of the decade as government officials debated including colleges and universities under the provisions of the Social Security Act, first passed in 1935. They were particularly troubled by the provisions for unemployment and old-age insurance. Both provisions required that covered employers pay a small tax on their payroll in order that their employees might be assured short-term unemployment benefits and/or small pensions after retirement. In both cases, employees were also required to contribute a portion of their earnings.[56] The 1935 law ultimately passed with a provision excluding nonprofit charitable, scientific, and educational institutions. Though some members of Congress expressed misgivings about this exclusion, the thinking

[55] Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, Pub. L. No. 75-718, 52 Stat. 1060 (1938).

[56] For discussion of the complexities of the Social Security law and its often gendered and racialized repercussions, see Alice Kessler-Harris, *In Pursuit of Equity: Women, Men, and the Quest for Economic Citizenship in 20th-Century Americ*a (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Robert Lieberman, *Shaping Race Policy: The United States in Comparative Perspective* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

of pro-New Deal Senator Alben Barkley of Kentucky seems to have easily prevailed: the law was meant to "levy the tax on organizations which are set up for profit."[57]

Four years later, however, the Roosevelt administration's approach to exclusions had changed. In part, this represented widespread public support of the program; even many business leaders had come to embrace the Social Security provisions.[58] Hearing rumors that Social Security Chairman Arthur Altmeyer was planning to recommend their inclusion, college administrators at Duke and other private institutions collaborated on how to address this possibility. Opinions among the national educational leadership on old age pensions were mixed, but the same group were "unanimous[ly]" opposed and "greatly disturbed" by the possibility of being included in the unemployment provisions which they considered a "straight tax upon us."[59] Faced with such a financial burden, those institutions might be forced to increase tuition, which "would impose an undesirable handicap to young men and women seeking higher education."[60] Though Few and others remained "heartily in sympathy" with the fundamental aims of social security, they considered it imperative that

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[57] 74 Cong. Rec. S9541 (daily ed. June 18, 1935) (statement of Sen. Alben Barkley). Representative King, no friend of the proposed bill, rhetorically asked "Why should stenographers, clerks, janitors, and so forth, doing the same class of work, be exempted from a tax when they are working for religious, charitable, scientific, or educational institutions and subject to the tax when working for other institutions or business?" Tydings raised similar concerns. Like the NRA and the Wagner Act, Social Security excluded agricultural and domestic workers. These exclusions were meant to guarantee the support of Southern Democrats. See Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005).

[58] See Jennifer Klein, *For All These Rights: Business, Labor, and the Shaping of America's Public-Private Welfare State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003) and Peter Swenson, "Arranged Alliance: Business Interests in the New Deal," *Politics & Society* 25, no. 1 (Mar 1993): 66-116.

[59] Frances Gaines, Chairman, Commission on Public Relations, Association of American Colleges, to Member Colleges, Feb. 23, 1939 and Flowers to Honorable J.W. Bailey, Feb. 17, 1939, Box 14, Flowers Records. Administrators at Yale corresponded with many other ivy league administrators about their fears of the social security legislation. See Deborah Sue Elkin, "Labor and the Left: The Limits of Acceptable Dissent at Yale University, 1920s to 1950s" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1995).

[60] David Cavers, Law School, to Flowers, Feb. 28, 1939, Box 14, Flowers Records.

the tax-exempt status of private institutions be maintained.[61] However, in order to confront what they now considered "discrimination" against their employees, hospital and university leaders who testified before Congress asked that the amended law include "our people" under compulsory employee contributions but continue to exclude the institutions themselves.[62] Emphasizing the detrimental impact of worker protections on colleges and universities, President Few and his colleagues thus hoped to segregate nonprofits from other types of institutions.

Leaders at Duke and elsewhere also tried to position universities as special kinds of institutions immune from many of the economic problems – cyclical unemployment or sudden layoffs due to business downturns - that the unemployment provision of the law sought to address. Frank De Vyver and Calvin Hoover, faculty members in economics and confidants to president Few, argued that the changes would prove "particularly undesirable" for Duke given the conditions that "characterize the academic community."[63] Disregarding the housekeeping and dining staff that invariably faced seasonal layoffs, they argued such provisions were unnecessary for universities such as Duke, "since fluctuations of employment in such institutions are not usually of an important nature."[64] This sentiment was echoed by other college administrators in private correspondence and public hearings.

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[61] Untitled manuscript, n.d., Box 14, Flowers Records.

[62] *An Act to Amend the Social Security Act, and For Other Purposes 1939: Hearings on H.R. 6635, Day 4, Before the Committee on Finance*, 76th Cong. 368 (1939) (Statement of Joint Advisory Committee, American Hospital Association).

[63] Frank DeVyver and Calvin Hoover to Few, memorandum, Feb. 6, 1939, Box 14, Flowers Records.

[64] Perhaps thinking exclusively of faculty members like themselves, they asserted that employee turnover in universities was "exceedingly small and largely voluntary." The President of Harvard and the Business Officer of MIT likewise wrote to President Few to express their opposition, insisting that their institutions "do not contribute to unemployment." DeVyver and Hoover to Few.

Of course, some within academia sought to staunch the hysteria about unemployment insurance. One Duke Law School faculty member, David Cavers, agreed that DeVyver and Hoover's argument was true if one only considered the "instructional staff."[65] Yet, taking into account the full employment picture at universities, "it is difficult to demonstrate that non-instructional employees would not benefit about as much from the old-age benefits as employees in other occupations."[66] Cavers' comments challenged the myopia of some of the faculty and administrators thinking about this issue, but his efforts to advocate an alternative to total rejection were largely ignored.

If Cavers represented a moderate approach to the question, a number of national leaders offered an even more robust and impassioned attack on the rumored plan. Their entreaties reveal how deeply the fears about employment regulation ran among some within higher education. In a scathing and dystopic missive to Senator Barkley, the President of the Association of American Colleges [AAC], R.A. Kent, raised the specter of state control and, ultimately, the eclipse of the American system of higher education. "The power to tax is the power to regulate," he warned, and "there is absolutely no forecasting how far government may go in the exercise of those alleged rights." Most importantly, the plan evinced a "fatal blindness to a distinction of basic importance in democracy," namely the difference "between those conditions of employment necessary for the pursuance of scholarly achievement and those which are essential to most desirable social as well as economic conditions in industry."[67] Though no doubt a reflection of his focus on the instructional job of universities,

[65] Cavers to Flowers, Feb. 28, 1939, Box 14, Flowers Records.

[66] Ibid.

[67] R.A. Kent, President, Association of American Colleges, to Honorable Alben Barkely, Jan. 31, 1939, Box 14, Flowers Records.

Kent's distinction elided the presence of all manner of non-academic workers who, by the 1930s, labored on college campuses. For men like Kent, federal efforts to regulate private universities, and in particular their employment relations, threatened to undermine the very heart of their social, legal, and intellectual status. Though Duke's leadership rarely wrote so extensively or baldly of their fears in this direction, they echoed many of his concerns about government oversight and, in particular, labor regulations.

Even Kent's argument did not go as far as some others who opposed the New Deal on principle, and who circulated among leaders of private institutions like Duke. Judge J.W. Bailey, a Duke donor and frequent correspondent with then-Vice President Flowers, for instance, accused the government of trying to "destroy endowments" and enact a "socialistic program."[68] Though business leaders generally came to accept the Social Security legislation – the National Association of Manufactures actually opposed attempts to roll back coverage in 1939 – their attitudes towards the New Deal more generally remained profoundly mixed, reflecting what one historian has called a "short-term jumble of opportunism, anxiety, and disillusion."[69] But Duke booster Bailey's critique echoed those leveled by the New Deal's most strident opponents clustering around the DuPont family and their American Liberty League.[70] His correspondence with Flowers suggests that Duke's leadership was at least familiar with the most strident anti-New Dealers in the business world.

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[68] Flowers to Honorable J.W. Bailey, Feb. 17, 1939, Box 14, Flowers Records.

[69] Quote from Colin Gordon, *New Deals: Business, Labor, and Politics in America, 1920-1935* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 285. See Swenson, "Arranged Alliance," on NAM and Klein, *For All These Rights*, on attitudes towards Social Security and the opportunity private insurers saw in the legislation. For an opposing view of NAM which stresses their attitudes towards the Wagner Act, see Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Businessmen's Crusade Against the New Deal* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010).

[70] Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands;* and Robert F. Buck, *The Corporate State and the Broker State: the DuPonts and American National Politics, 1925-1940* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990).

On the whole, educational leaders showed far more restraint than AAC President Kent in their rhetoric. Yet, ironically, they ultimately succeeded where business leaders could not. Though the Social Security Advisory board unanimously recommended the inclusion of organizations like Duke in 1939, they were again excluded from coverage. Most expert witnesses, including Gerald Swope of GE, concurred with the advisory board, focusing their comments on the fate of "the working people around the place, such as janitors, people like that."[71] But even the chair of the board admitted that "from the administrative standpoint they can be easily brought in, but from the standpoint of public understanding there may be a question."[72] In the end, members of Congress accepted the claims made by educational and other nonprofit leaders that the employer contribution would unduly burden "those institutions which are serving a worthy purpose for the benefit of the general welfare."[73] Finding no workable solution, the legislators decided to ignore the recommendations of the advisory committee and retain the status quo.

As a result of these political negotiations, as the 1930s drew to a close, employees at nonprofits like Duke lacked basic wage and labor protections and could not participate in the nation's social security programs. Fearing for the health of their institutions, college and university administrators marshalled legal, practical, and especially moral arguments for treating them and their employees differently than workers elsewhere. In some cases, they seem to have succeeded through technicalities. But they also found sympathetic lawmakers.

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[71] *Social Security Act Amendments of 1939: Hearings, Day 16, Before the Committee on Ways and Means*, 77th Cong. 1089 (1939) (Statement of Gerard Swope, President, General Electric Co.).

[72] *An Act to Amend the Social Security Act, and For Other Purposes 1939: Hearings on H.R. 6635, Day 1, Before the Committee on Finance*, 76th Cong. 22 (1939) (Statement of Arthur Altmeyer, Chairman, Social Security Board).

[73] Pierson to Flowers, Aug. 16, 1933, Box 15, Flowers Records.

Some were proponents of the New Deal and others were longtime critics, but both agreed with education leaders' claims about the moral economy of nonprofits.

The opportunities and the threats posed by the New Deal facilitated greater coordination among national leaders of higher education and prompted a sharpening sense of kinship among them. Each new piece of legislation prompted ever stronger efforts among college and university administrators and within hospital and educational associations to make sense of and, usually, thwart the government's plans. As a result, the leadership of these institutions and associations began to see themselves more clearly as a particular class with shared interests, and even began to police the behavior of colleagues in order to promote a united front.[74] With the aid of their national representatives and their supporters in the business and political communities, college and university administrators like Duke president Few were able to resist all attempts to pull their institutions under the purview of the regulatory state.

In the series of confrontations with the federal administrative apparatus outlined above, private institutions like Duke and their associations began to frame arguments that both justified increased federal investment in higher education and mounted a formidable ethical barrier to the regulation that might accompany such an investment. In particular, university and college administrators came to emphasize a "privately-administered" nonprofit status that made them uniquely situated to benefit from the continued evolution of the modern welfare state in the postwar period.[75] The most important aspect of this status was its exemption from labor regulations at a moment when the stakes were most pronounced.

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[74] Hawkins, *Banding Together*.

[75] Untitled manuscript, Box 14, Flowers Records.

Their success in this endeavor had vital consequences for colleges and universities themselves and for the growing numbers of people who worked in the service of knowledge. College administrators succeeded in denying their employees the status of worker at the precise moment that the government began to offer protections to workers as a class *and* as universities like Duke were growing into large-scale, anchor employers.

GOVERNMENT-UNIVERSITY RELATIONS IN POSTWAR KEYNESIANISM

Despite many challenges, private college administrators had negotiated a relatively beneficial status for their institutions within the particular confluence of New Deal programs. Still, most expressed a measure of unease as they looked ahead toward the postwar world. Like many Americans, they attributed much of the activism of the New Deal state to the emergency circumstances of depression and war but also understood that many of the new government functions that arose from those emergencies would endure. Duke's postwar presidents and their counterparts in other colleges and universities ultimately repurposed many of the same New Deal-era arguments when negotiating their status with the postwar welfare state.

Many educational leaders were actually surprised to find government largesse expanded and redirected in ways that benefited their demands for growth in the postwar period. Most significant, perhaps, was the Serviceman's Bill of Rights, or the GI Bill.[76] The war had occasioned closer relationships between the military and universities. At Duke, faculty received funding for wartime work, but the institution was also selected as a Navy training school, which kept enrollments up. Postwar authorities nurtured this relationship

[76] See Glenn Altschuler and Stuart Blumin, *The GI Bill: A New Deal for Veterans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

further. Among other provisions, the GI Bill guaranteed federal support for returning veterans who hoped to obtain a college education. Though some private college administrators raised concerns about the wisdom or ideal size of government subsidies, most seized on the promised influx of students and income, and Duke was no exception. In 1946, a full sixty percent of the 5790 students enrolled at Duke were veterans who attended with financial support from the GI Bill.[77] As enrollments boomed, one Duke administrator requested that Senator Robert Taft pass legislation that allowed for grants-in-aid of permanent construction for educational facilities, arguing that "our enrollments will increase further if it is possible to take care of more men students."[78] The GI Bill facilitated Duke's continued growth in the postwar period and helped shift the attitudes of even long-time skeptics towards public support for private education.[79]

In addition, while federal aid remained "targeted or indirect," Duke and many other private universities continued to benefit considerably from the postwar public investment in science and medicine.[80] That investment usually remained free of cumbersome oversight as it had during the New Deal. The Hill-Burton Act, passed in 1946, set aside federal monies for hospital construction and expansion.[81] Already the largest hospital in the state, Duke

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[77] Charles Jordan to Government Branch, Inter-Agency Division, Civilian Production Administration, July 15, 1946, Box 2, Charles Jordan Papers, DU Archives. Eventually, 2.2 Million undergraduate and graduate enrollees took part in the program across the country. The 1947-8 school year was the high-water mark nationally, when the GI Bill aided nearly half of all enrollments. See Altschuler and Blumin, *The GI Bill.*

[78] Myatt, Operations Manager, to Honorable Robert Taft, Apr. 12, 1947, Box 4, Operations and Maintenance Department Records, DU Archives.

[79] For the bill's impact on administrators' thinking, see Hawkins, *Banding Together*, 165-169.

[80] Shermer, "A Fraught Partnership," 160.

[81]By 1950, around 93% of Hill-Burton funding was allocated to southern states, totaling hundreds of millions of dollars. Though the south's share of Hill-Burton funds decreased over the postwar period as hospital leaders in other states pressed their own interests, the region continued to attract a disproportionate percentage of available resources. North Carolina was the first state to begin construction with Hill-Burton funds and eventually

administrators strategized with colleagues on the North Carolina Medical Care Commission to channel some portion of the "Hill-Burton money" to Duke's building needs.[82] And thanks in large part to the intervention of southern Democrats in Congress, the federal government's largesse required no concessions on labor protection. Nor, as historian Karen Kruse Thomas has noted, did Hill-Burton provide anti-discrimination protections to prevent the development of a "deluxe Jim Crow" system of healthcare, of which Duke became a part.[83] Thus, federal funding for science, technology, and STEM education likewise encouraged Duke's growth in the postwar period. A later president of Duke, Douglas Knight, admitted in the 1960s that "I cannot in honesty pretend that we could hope to be a first-rate university today unless we were willing to accept support" from the federal government.[84] Previous historians have detailed both the mixed feelings among private college administrators on the question of federal support and the limited and targeted nature of that support. Administrators of universities like Duke understood federal aid to be a crucial element to the institution-building project that marked midcentury higher education.

If private university administrators had grown more welcoming of federal expenditures, they remained less sanguine on the regulatory powers of the postwar state. As lawmakers amended three key policies (the Social Security Act, the National Labor Relations

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accounted for a fifth of the total federal funds used in the postwar period. Many public facilities benefited from Hill-Burton and matching funds, but by far the greatest proportion of federal and other government funding (65% of both federal and total monies) went to private hospitals in the state. Karen Kruse Thomas, *Deluxe Jim Crow: Civil Rights and American Health Policy, 1935-1954* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011).

[82] Charles Jordan to Wilbur Davison, Dean of Medicine 1950, Box 1, Jordan Papers. They also used Hill-Burton funding to construct a new nurse dormitory and office space.

[83] Thomas, *Deluxe Jim Crow*.

[84] Douglas Knight, President, to Robert Johnston, Class of 1916, Sept. 8, 1966, Box 33, Douglas M. Knight Records, DU Archives.

Act, and the Fair Labor Standards Act), educational leaders reviewed and sometimes revised their attitudes to certain elements of the welfare state. However, while the specifics of their policy proposals sometimes shifted slightly, they remained fiercely protective of their special status as employers. Embracing increasing federal investment while accepting labor regulations in a limited fashion, and only on their own terms, educational leaders mirrored the business community's Janus-faced approach to the Keynesian state.[85]

For one thing, educational leaders were forced to reckon with Americans' considerable satisfaction with the fundamental principles of the Social Security Act's old-age and survivor's insurance. Duke and other nonprofit organizations were once keen to secure their exemption from many provisions of social security. In a series of hearings on proposed amendments to the Social Security Act in the late 1940s, representatives of the nation's nonprofit system testified to a fundamentally changed perspective among college and hospital administrators. Speaking for the nation's nonprofit hospitals, the President of the American Hospital Association acknowledged that they found "themselves embarrassed as employers by being unable to offer the benefits" that the law provided.[86] In that context, others now noted the comparatively low cost of a federal program of old age insurance.[87]

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[85] See also Shermer, "A Fraught Partnership." For the relationship between business leaders and the state, see Philips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*; Robert M. Collins, *The Business Response to Keynes, 1929-1964* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981); Tami Friedman, "'Free Enterprise' or Federal Aid? The Business Response to Economic Restructuring in the Long 1950s," in *Capital Gains*; Brent Cebul, "'They Were the Moving Spirits': Business and Supply-Side Liberalism in the Postwar South," in *Capital Gains*.

[86] *Amendments to Social Security Act: Hearings, Day 18, Before the Committee on Ways and Means*, 79th Cong. 481 (1946) (Statement by Dr. Donald Smelzer, American Hospital Association).

[87] *Amendments to Social Security Act: Hearings, Day 13, Before the Committee on Ways and Means*, 79th Cong. 356 (1946) (Statement by George Zook, President, American Council of Education). 74% of private were in favor, 82% of public were. Betraying the influence of private institutions like Duke within his association, Zook at the same time leveled strong objections to provisions in the law that differentiated between private and public schools. They worried that only private colleges would be subject to taxation under compulsory inclusion. See Hawkins, *Banding Together*.

Given assurances that coverage under the law would not be "construed as violating the traditional tax-exempt status of nonprofit organizations," nonprofit administrators now approved of inclusion.[88] What had once been a boon for colleges, now felt like a burden, and they wanted it changed.

Administrators failed to achieve this goal in 1946, so they made an even more pronounced stand in favor of inclusion in hearings about the issue three years later. Rather than simply supporting the expansion of social security coverage, they demanded an immediate "remedy [to] the injustice now done" to employees of nonprofit colleges and universities.[89] Brushing past the history of his own organization's objections to inclusion and barely noting their practical employment concerns, ACE representative Herman Gray testified that the "great public service" these employees performed "should make them the first to be considered in any scheme of social insurance, not the last."[90] Further resolving any lingering resistance, the amendments passed in 1950 offered only the "opportunity" for inclusion to nonprofit employees, conditioned on the institution's voluntary compliance and the agreement of 2/3 of current employees.[91] Duke employees quickly voted to enroll in social security, offering a rare glimpse of workers' attitudes about the issue.[92] Thus, college

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[88] *Amendments to Social Security Act: Hearings, Day 1, Before the Committee on Ways and Means*, 79th Cong. 11 (1946) (Statement by Arthur J. Altmeyer, Chairman, Social Security Board).

[89] *Social Security Act Amendments of 1949: Hearings on H.R. 2892, before the Committee on Ways and Means*, 81st Cong. 2531 (1949) (Statement by Herman A. Gray, Chairman, American Council of Education, Committee on Extension of Social Security Benefits).

[90] Ibid.

[91] This optional status persisted until 1983.

[92] Others didn't give their employees the option, namely Harvard. Morton and Phyllis Keller, *Making Harvard Modern: The Rise of America's University* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 138-9. Keller and Keller say that employees were not happy with this decision.

administrators had guaranteed that which they argued "should be preserved throughout all time" - their tax-exemption and special status - while also securing their inclusion in the nation's flagship social security program.[93]

Discussions of revisions to the Fair Labor Standards Act in the postwar period also mattered to Duke, its fellow private colleges, and their employees. Due to the limited scope of its coverage of employees engaged in interstate commerce, the Act was interpreted as excluding nonprofit universities and hospitals. Unions and liberal members of Congress finally mounted a strong advocacy for the inclusion of large service institutions under the FLSA in 1956 and 1959.[94] However, while the resulting amendments, passed in 1961, broadened the definition of commerce to include any large "enterprise," government administrators continued to argue that "eleemosynary, religious, or educational institutions which are not operated for profit are not enterprises within the meaning" of the law because "there is no business purpose involved in nonprofit organizations."[95] It was not until 1965, nearly three decades after the law's adoption, that minimum wage and maximum hour coverage was finally extended to employees of hospitals and institutions of higher education.

Because the favorable status of nonprofit institutions was so rarely in question after an initial period of uncertainty, Duke and other college administrators never had to muster a substantive defense of their exemptions. But they took advantage of it. The table below charts the minimum wages of Duke's service employees as measured against the minimum standards established by the FLSA.

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[93] *Amendments to Social Security Act: Hearings, Day 13, Before the Committee on Ways and Means*, 79th Cong. 354-357 (1946) (Statement by George Zook, President, American Council of Education Zook, President, ACE).

[94] "Personnel Handbook," 1966, Box 8, Theodore W. Minah Records and Records, DU Archives.

[95] *New 1961 Minimum Wage Law with Explanation* (Chicago: Commerce Clearing House, Inc., 1961), 23.

	1938	1940	1945	1950	1956	1960	1965	1968
Duke Minimum Wage	$0.18	$0.19/ $.0.10*		$0.37	$0.50	$0.80		$0.95
Federal Minimum Wage	$0.25		$0.40	$0.75	$1.00		$1.25	$1.60
NC State Minimum Wage								$1.00

Figure 1.1 Comparison of Duke, Federal, and State Minimum Wages[96]

On the final matter of labor organizing, educational leaders easily found consensus. The New Deal-era National Labor Relations Act [NLRA] had guaranteed certain employees the right to collectively bargain and established the mechanisms for federal oversight of union elections. Like the FLSA, the NLRA did not explicitly exclude nonprofit colleges and universities from coverage and rested on the Congressional power to regulate interstate commerce. However, nonprofit institutions do not seem to have had as much success avoiding coverage under the NLRA as they did with the minimum wage law. According to an article in the *Duke Law Journal* in 1972, the Board asserted jurisdiction over a majority of nonprofit educational cases brought before them in the years between 1935 and 1942.[97] As a result, administrators remained alert to renewed debates about the scope and mechanisms of the labor protections offered under the NLRA.

Buttressed by a rising conservative reaction to the New Deal state in the postwar period, Senator Robert Taft and Representative Fred Hartley shepherded through their

[96] All wages hourly. Duke minimum wages before 1960 are estimated based on yearly wages and 50-hour weeks, which seems standard. The outlier of 10 cents comes from a newspaper article about the 1942 bus boy strike. "Duke Hospital Budgets, 1934-1940," Box 15, Treasurer Records; Elizabeth Kaiser to Mr. W.G. Cooper, Memorandum, Sept. 29, 1953, Box 11, Minah Records; Kaiser to Cooper, Memorandum, Sept. 28, 1955, Box 11, Minah Records; "Duke CORE report regarding discrimination and unfair employment," c. 1960, Box 6, Knight Records; Bowers to Adams, Sept. 22, 1969, Box 12, Vice President for Business and Finance Records, DU Archives.

[97] "The Nonprofit Hospital Exemption of the National Labor Relations Act: Application to the University-Operated Hospital in Duke University," *Duke Law Journal* 3 (1972): 627-652.

respective Houses of Congress two bills proposing to amend the NLRA in the early months of 1946. The House and Senate bills were substantially alike but for a few key differences. As passed, the House bill followed the wording in the Social Security law and excluded from the category of employer "any corporation, community chest, fund, or foundation organized and operated exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, literary or educational purposes."[98] When initially reported, the Senate bill contained no such exclusions.[99] Before the Taft-Hartley amendments to the NLRA would finally pass into law, the general charitable exclusion would be removed and one specifically exempting nonprofit hospitals included. Despite somewhat competing views expressed about nonprofit institutions at this pivotal moment, the fate of these exemptions established a crucial legal precedent that substantially framed the experience of millions of employees for decades.

The debates around these amendments reveal a widespread though not universal accord in support of nonprofit privilege among political leaders by the 1940s. In the Senate, though Taft believed there was a consensus that "strikes in hospitals that endanger life and health, [and] in charitable institutions that withhold relief to the needy" were unacceptable and categorically illegal, he did not think it necessary to include any provisions excluding nonprofits or hospitals as they were "not engaged in interstate commerce, and […] their business should not be so construed."[100] Still, Senator Tydings from Maryland, who proposed a new hospital exemption, vaguely insisted that he understood "from the Hospital

[98] An Act to Amend the National Labor Relations Act, H.R. 3020, as reported, 80th Cong. (1947).

[99] An Act to Amend the National Labor Relations Act, S. 1126, as reported, 80th Cong. (1947).

[100] 80 Cong. Rec. S4997 (daily ed. May 12, 1947) (Statement of Sen. Robert A. Taft). Taft's view was widely accepted by other members of Congress, and subsequently became the basis for later decisions declining NLRB jurisdiction over nonprofits. However, despite its power, this thinking seems to have been divorced from precedent pretty clearly set by the NLRB between 1935 and 1947.

Association that his amendment would be helpful in their efforts to serve […] all mankind."[101] A few Democratic Senators demurred, noting first that employees like nurses "should be permitted a decent living" and later noting that "there are hospitals that are highly profitable."[102] Emphasizing nonprofit hospitals' public service, "local" jurisdiction, and reliance on "benevolence," Tydings overcame their half-hearted objections and his amendment passed with a voice vote on the same day that it was proposed.[103]

Though it was the House bill that initially included a general nonprofit exemption, it was also there that such an exclusion encountered more heated opposition. Writing in the House Committee minority report, then Massachusetts Congressman John F. Kennedy strenuously objected to the blanket exemption to nonprofits, arguing that such categories were "very broadly defined" and might provide cover for nonprofits to carry on extensive business activities unchecked.[104] In debate, Arthur Klein of New York protested that "it seems ironical that organizations devoted to the social welfare should be exempted from bargaining with their own, often underpaid employees."[105] Still, House members in the majority seem to have brushed right past the concerns of Klein and Kennedy. When the provision was eventually removed in conference, it was only because Hartley and others eventually conceded to Senator Taft's (erroneous) argument that nonprofits did not "affect

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[101] 80 Cong. Rec. S4997 (daily ed. May 12, 1947) (Statement of Sen. Millard Tydings).

[102] 80 Cong. Rec. S4997 (daily ed. May 12, 1947) (Statement of Sen. Glen Taylor) (Statement of Sen. Harley Kilgore). Taylor was one of the more liberal members of the Senate, but in the end asked only for assurances that professional employees of nonprofits "should be permitted a decent living and should not be hamstrung in their efforts to obtain it" before granting his approval. How that was to be achieved was left unclear.

[103] 80 Cong. Rec. S4997 (daily ed. May 12, 1947) (Statement of Sen. Millard Tydings).

[104] H.R. Report No. 245 (1947) (Supp. Minority Report by Sen. John Kennedy).

[105] 80 Cong. Rec. H3446 (daily ed. Apr. 15, 1947) (Statement by Rep. Arthur Klein).

commerce" and, most importantly, that "only in exceptional circumstances" had the NLRB ever even considered them as such.[106] Despite no formal exclusion, the NLRB would use these statements as evidence of congressional intent and continue to refuse jurisdiction over all kinds of nonprofits.[107] Moreover, the Tydings Amendment ensured that congressional action would be required to reverse the protections afforded nonprofit hospitals like Duke.

The moral logic of service and sacrifice extended to all employees of these institutions, preventing them from exercising the rights guaranteed to many others under the New Deal regime. A 1946 Superior Court ruling, quoted in the proceedings, declared even the "more humble positions in the laboratory and diet kitchen, the engine room or the power plant […] essential to the care and healing of the sick," articulating the same moral argument about service and sacrifice.[108] These employees, the ruling argued, "must understand that they have, in assuming that obligation, surrendered rights possessed" by others.[109] Because employees of nonprofits, especially nonprofit hospitals, were engaged in public service, they were barred from exercising the same rights as other employees. So powerful was the perception of deserved nonprofit exemption – what would become known as the "worthy cause" exemption following a 1951 NLRB ruling declining jurisdiction over Columbia University - that even auxiliary services like campus stores and cafes were considered

[106] H.R. Report No. 510 (1947) (Conf. Report).

[107] Christy Newman, "Legal History of Collective Bargaining in Private Higher Education" (PhD diss., Boston College, 1984).

[108] *Amendments to the National Labor Relations Act: Hearings on H.R. 8, H.R. 725, H.R. 880, H.R. 1095, H.R. 1096, Day 27, Before the Committee on Education and Labor*, 80th Cong. 2954 (1947) (Statement by Eugene C. Gerhart). See discussion of the FLSA above.

[109] Ibid.

"noncommercial operations intimately connected with the College's non-profit educational process."[110]

The legislation that these debates produced restricted the rights of employees of nonprofit colleges and universities like Duke. The Taft-Hartley amendments most famously imposed new restrictions on collective action and cracked down on left-wing unions.[111] But conservative legislators also succeeded in using the amendments to exclude from coverage a greater number of wage workers than ever before, who now had no federally-protected collective bargaining rights. The Wagner Act covered (only) fifty-six percent of the labor force, a figure that Taft-Hartley reduced nearly twenty percent.[112] While employees of nonprofit educational and medical facilities comprised only a portion of those so excluded, numbering an estimated two million at the time, those numbers grew tremendously as the government's investment in such institutions increased in kind.[113]

Duke Presidents Few, Flowers, and Hollis Edens and other senior administrative officials directly lobbied federal and state authorities on New Deal and post-war era labor policies. They also embraced the spending priorities undergirding the new knowledge economy, encouraging faculty members to solicit government funding and designing new programs well suited to attract government largesse.[114] And, even in those campaigns where

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[110] "NLRB Claims Jurisdiction Over University Food Service," c. 1970, clipping, Box 31, Minah Records.

[111] See Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White*, 62-5; Nelson Lichtenstein, *State of the Union: A Century of Labor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); and the essays in Steve Rosswurm, ed., *The CIO's Left-Led Unions* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992).

[112] Robert J. Rosenthal, "Exclusions of Employees Under the Taft-Hartley Act," *International Labor Review* 4 (July 1951): 556-570.

[113] Ibid.

[114] Richard Bindewald, "A Non-Academic Personnel Program at Duke," c. June 1967, Box 7, VP Records. For the federal spending on university science, see Roger Geiger, *Research and Relevant Knowledge: American Research Universities Since World War II* (New York: Oxford University press, 1993).

Duke's administrators took a back seat to national educational associations, the outcomes of those negotiations fundamentally shaped Duke's privileges and responsibilities as an employer and attenuated the privileges and responsibilities of their growing numbers of employees. Whereas even the chief beneficiaries of the emerging military-industrial complex had to accept labor regulation as the corollary of government investment, nonprofit institutions successfully forestalled the same fate in the crucial midcentury years. Their ability to do so helped facilitate the enormous growth of the nonprofit sector while fundamentally shaping the experiences of the increasing numbers of the nation's workers employed in such institutions. Nonprofit medical centers had overtaken for-profit hospitals as the primary model for the provision of medical care.[115] More broadly, universities like Duke had made themselves into the "classic American institution of the twentieth century" in large part by defining its employees out of the category of worker.[116]

WHAT'S IN A NAME?: BUSINESS, NONPROFIT, AND THE PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

Duke's response to the New Deal and postwar Keynesian state defined the private college and university as a magnanimous institution that required continued investment, cultivation, and protection from oversight. Its leaders' advocacy helped ensure that Duke and other institutions like it could receive generous subsidies while avoiding most of the regulations that had come to define the American labor-management system. This

[115] Private for-profit hospitals had dominated the hospital industry prior to the New Deal and postwar Keynesianism. See Paul Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine* (New York: Basic Books, 1982), 219.

[116] Winling, *Building the Ivory Tower*, 13.

ambivalence was not simply legal maneuvering deployed in response to the state. Rather, Duke administrators' genuine embrace of these sometimes-contradictory claims reveals a broader ambiguity in the university community's self-perception. Was it a business or a charity, or some combination of the two? Did a nonprofit have different social responsibilities than a business? The legal and social ambiguities surrounding Duke's nature ultimately defined the its status as an employer.

Duke's leadership sometimes distanced the institution from the title of "charity." In early correspondence, the university's longtime Board Chairman, Colonel John Bruton, offered the new medical school's Dean a pointed warning on this topic as the latter drafted a dedication address. Beware, he intoned, "the mistaken idea, which seems to prevail generally, that the [hospital] is a charity institution, open to the public, services to be charged for at the pleasure of the patients, or to be accepted as a matter of course free from legal obligations on the part of the patients." It is true that the Hospital was "committed along the lines of the best service to be furnished the patients," but the patients were "expected to show their appreciation by paying for the service rendered." He could not have made himself clearer: "The Hospital is not a charity institution."[117] Payment to the hospital was a display of gratitude which, while not a fee-for-service, was nevertheless required. Such a formulation allowed Bruton to vehemently deny that Duke Hospital was a charity while also distancing it from establishments that sold services - that is, businesses. Despite Burton's best efforts, he and other university leaders would continue to regret that a better job was not done in Duke's earliest years to disabuse the public of this so-called "mistaken idea" that the hospital was a charity.

[117] Bruton to Davison, Apr. 3, 1931, Box 13, Wilburt Davison Records, Duke University Medical Center Archives.

But even when administrators sought to shift the public's perception of the university and its hospital as charities, they continued to depend on its charitable status in rhetorical and political battles over taxes and wages. They were particularly reliant upon this argument when opposing labor regulation, which they found especially troubling. Duke administrators maintained that any attempt to regulate their employment practices would unfairly penalize the university and Hospital and limit "its ability to do charity."[118] Colonel Bruton and the university's administrators expressly argued that the university's ability to perform its charitable function rested on its ability to pay its nonprofessional staff wages below the estimated minimum required for maintenance. Duke's status as a charity was thus central to its ability to win exemption from many of the new functions of the regulatory state.

Moreover, while administrators sometimes opposed treating the university as a charity, they otherwise celebrated Duke's status as an organization "not operated for a profit but merely as a *service*."[119] In this way, Duke administrators and college leaders across the country posed service and profit in oppositional and mutually exclusive terms in broader debates about the nature of their work. Universities and hospitals, they argued, were institutions "which function[ed] not for dollar profit but for service."[120] The idea that Duke and other private institutions were "performing a public service" acted as a powerful counter to the prevailing impulse to regulate large economic institutions.[121] According to Duke

[118] Bryson, Legal opinion, n.d., Box 34, Flowers Records.

[119] "Letters to the Chronicle: Facts and Figures on Union Prices," *The Duke Chronicle*, Mar. 14, 1947.

[120] "Interim Report," Feb. 1952, Box 30, A. Hollis Edens Records, DU Archives.

[121] Edens to Clyde Hoey, Senator, Apr. 23, 1952, Box 70, Edens Records.

administrators and their national colleagues, then, the singular characteristic of private universities was the absence of profits distributed to their stockholders.

But the distinction between profit and income was not as clear to all of the university's constituents. Throughout the middle of the century, students and patients expressed their own suspicion about the university's status. Legally, the university's nonprofit status denoted a very specific organizational structure: it did not pay dividends to a set of owners or stockholders. But that status did not always capture the *feeling* of the university's constituents, who might be discomfited by the scope of its rapid expansion or the amount of money flowing into its coffers. The university functioned, in their lives, in ways indistinguishable from business and made a great deal of income in the process. Even student reporters, tasked with assuring their colleagues that "profits were more imaginary than real," frequently admitted harboring "many misconceptions" about the nonprofit status of the university themselves.[122] And the student newspaper's recurring investigative reports never fully extinguished critiques over the cost of a cup of coffee or a load of laundry. Even if such complaints were not about profit per se, they reflected skepticism about Duke's character as an institution.

And despite administrators' own protestations, if, as administrators claimed, "many people apparently refuse[d] to realize" that the University and Hospital were nonprofit enterprises, we might ascribe it to the contradictory assertions emanating from the institution itself.[123] Auxiliary service directors at Duke, like many across the nation, proudly proclaimed

[122] "Memorandum of the Committee for Investigation and Recommendation on Student Affairs," Mar. 8, 1934, Box 8, Flowers Records.

[123] "Duke Still Offers Top Notch Medical Care at Minimum Cost," *Intercom*, Aug. 1954.

that they operated in a "business-like manner."[124] Senior administrators and university boosters celebrated these business principles. In answering some skeptics, the hospital's administrators defended its partnership with a Private Diagnostic Clinic (PDC) run by some of Duke's medical faculty by arguing that patients would be treated "perfunctorily if the profit motive were eliminated."[125] Administrators and supervisors throughout the university spoke frequently of the need for "efficiency" and other "sound business" practices. In fact, the term "big business" peppered the declarations of administrators and managers nearly as frequently as the term "nonprofit."[126] Nor were Duke's administrators outliers in the field of university and hospital administration. According to one observer of small-college personnel practices, "it [was] by emphasizing its likenesses to business and government rather than its unlikeness that higher education will best know itself."[127] The triumphant celebration of both "business" and "service" often coexisted, if awkwardly, in the same sentiment.

Historians interested in the changing shape of higher education have tried to clarify this ambiguity. But they have largely overlooked how the seemingly contradictory frameworks of business and charity worked *together* to shape the university as economic institution and employer. Duke's status as an employer was in part defined by its simultaneous embrace of the social recognition of charity and the trappings of bureaucratic

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[124] Minah to University Admissions, Columbia University, Feb. 13, 1958, Box 41, Minah Records.

[125] Davison to Mr. Brower, June 29, 1948, Box 51, VP Records.

[126] "Managers and Supervisors Manual," n.d., Box 9, Business Division Records, DU Archives; Frank Green, "Duke Laundry Pays Its Own Way; Not Interested in Large Profit," *The Duke Chronicle*, Jan. 8, 1954; Minah to Miss Marjorie Knapp, Aug. 14, 1951, Box 41, Minah Records.

[127] William H. Allen, *Self Surveys by Colleges and Universities* (Yonkers-on-Hudson: World Book Company, 1917), 10.

and business management - a complexity made most manifest in the university's special status in the New Deal order.

Conclusion

In 1959, more than forty years after James Duke's donation, University officials celebrated the announcement of the "Fifth Decade Plan" which promised to build upon the institution's success and launch it into another great period of expanding prominence. In the intervening decades, Duke had undergone an enormous transformation, propelling itself to national stature with almost unprecedented speed. The magnitude of James Duke's philanthropy had leant power and prestige to the university, imbuing its administrators and leaders with lofty ambitions and the resources to pursue them.

To realize these ambitions, the University also had to adapt to a complex set of circumstances that threatened to undermine their early good fortune. Yet while the Great Depression caused unprecedented financial hardship and widespread institutional failure, it also inspired politicians and average people alike to carve out a place for state intervention in the economy. College administrators successfully parried the government's attempts to regulate their economic status while increasingly embracing its funding. When state investment in institutional growth and basic science research boomed in the postwar period, a significant portion of that largesse made its way to the nation's college campuses.

With the power of public investment behind them and the power of public oversight forestalled, Duke University underwent a half-century of growth and development. Its initial building program - so lauded in 1930 - was simply the beginning. Ten years later, enrollment was at nearly four-thousand students and reached 5,350 in 1946.[128] By 1960, more than six

[128] *Hill's Durham (Durham County, NC) City Directory* (Richmond: Hill Directory Co., 1940, 1946).

thousand students were enrolled at Duke.[129] The Hospital was expanded in 1940, and again in 1954 when a new wing made Duke second only to the venerated Johns Hopkins in size in the South.[130]

Duke's growing size and stature required it to expand its status as regional employer. The new facilities that President Few boasted about had to be staffed. And as the institution grew, the organization of work on campus changed in ways that will be explored in greater detail in later chapters. As a wartime pamphlet extolling the "University Community" put it:

> "Matters are not as simple as they were when teachers washed their own blackboards and kept their own fires…in this day of specialization the Duke community presents a cross-section of the modern world…laboratories need assistants to care for intricate and expensive apparatus; administrators and busy professors need secretaries; the maintenance departments require adequate crews of electricians, mechanics, carpenters, painters, plumbers, and ground workers."[131]

That 1943 pamphlet counted 1,948 full-time employees of the University, a figure that would only increase during the period of postwar growth.[132] Administrators cultivated that non-academic workforce as it grew and developed against the backdrop of the national political and legal context explored in this chapter.

Propelled by a privileged two-pronged relationship with the activist state that continued into the postwar period, Duke expanded into a regional economic anchor and the area's largest employer. While nearly everyone at the time understood the exclusion of agricultural and domestic labor from most New Deal reforms as a product of political

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[129] *Hill's Durham (Durham County, NC) City Directory* (Richmond: Hill Directory Co., 1960)

[130] "Duke Hospital to Construct Seven-Floor Wing to Clinic," *The Duke Chronicle*, Jan. 12, 1954.

[131] "Duke University and the War," pamphlet, 1943, Box 1, Jordan Papers.

[132] Ibid. This enormous growth in employment was true for many colleges and universities. Harvard, for instance, had over five thousand non-academic employees by 1960. Keller and Keller, *Making Harvard Modern*, 194.

expediency, the protections eventually afforded universities like Duke rested on ideological foundations that carried enormous weight. Duke administrators sought to shape a vision of private colleges that obscured the university's function as an employer of growing numbers of low-wage, non-academic workers. For most of Duke's employees, that vision limited their legal protections, maintained comparatively low wages, and elided their presence as members of the university community altogether.

CHAPTER 2: DURHAM'S NEW DOMESTICS: GENDER, RACE, AND THE PUBLIC HOUSEHOLD OF DUKE, 1930-1960

In February of 1934, an urgent telegram arrived on the New York City desk of Thomas Perkins, the Executive Director of the Duke Endowment. The signatories, over 100 male students at Duke University, decried that they were being "treated like children not men" and pleaded with Perkins to intercede on their behalf.[1] The Committee for Investigation and Recommendation on Student Affairs reported that the unrest stemmed from a salacious accusation: Duke University's administration was using "Negro servants as spies and informers in the dormitories on the West Campus."[2] Maids were allegedly betraying students' privacy to their white supervisors – called housekeepers at the time – who promptly passed the information along to the Dean's office. Though staff members denied the accusation, male students were convinced that white administrators had weaponized the intimacy afforded the black maids who cleaned their rooms and made their beds every morning, forging an unjust alliance against them.

[1] Telegram to W.R. Perkins, Feb. 7, 1934, Box 70, William Few Records, Duke University Archives [hereafter DU Archives].

[2] "Interim Report Released Following Lengthy Meeting of CIRSA Monday Evening," *The Duke Chronicle*, Feb. 28, 1934.

Such concerns about privacy and propriety frequently arose among the student body at Duke. They indicate students' discomfort with and dependence upon the people who cleaned up after them. Years before the 1934 "revolt," a cartoon in the student yearbook depicting three black Duke University maids suggested similar fears about the intimate knowledge that these women might acquire. Bearing the exaggerated features common to racist cartoons of the era and outfitted in the standard white apron of the domestic worker, the maids mimed the hand gestures associated with the cartoon's title: 'See no evil, Hear no evil, Speak no evil."[3] Moreover, concerns about sneaky maids making deals with nosy housekeepers seemed to haunt Duke's campus, prompting students to protest "dormitory regulations" well into the postwar period.[4] As they moved through intimate campus spaces, students came to see the men and women who cooked and cleaned for them as both necessary and potentially threatening.

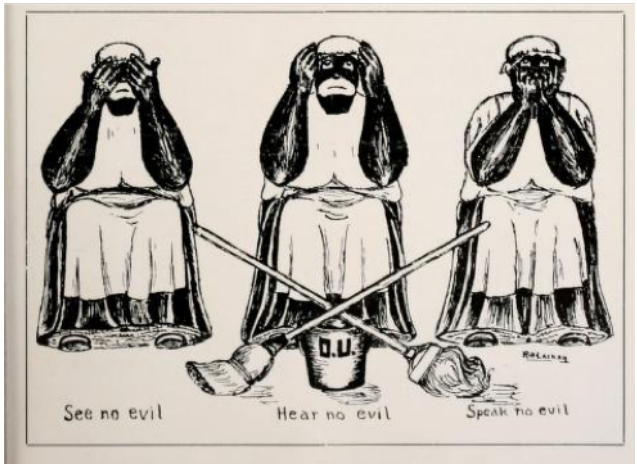

Figure 2.1 Image from student yearbook, The Chanticleer, 1930.

These workers were essential to midcentury college life and central to the internal contradictions of the knowledge economy. By the 1950s, a series of monumental philanthropic gifts and government grants had given Duke what its early leadership dreamed of: the look and feel of a "University in ferment, of a University becoming greater with the

[3] *The Chanticleer*, 1930.

[4] William Wannamaker, Dean of Students, to Rev. Hobbs, New Bern, Mar. 26, 1934, Box 7, William Wannamaker Papers, DU Archives. Note that "housekeepers" was the title given to white supervisors of black dormitory maids. See Al Webb, "West Men Object to Rooming Checks," *The Duke Chronicle,* Nov. 3, 1953.

passing of each year."[5] For members of the public, Duke's growth, like that of other major Universities, inspired concern alongside celebration. In the early twentieth century, critics of the rising research University model for higher education and medical care feared that size would breed impersonality and immorality, endangering the sense of community they considered essential to "the collegiate ideal."[6]

In response to these fears, administrators of major universities like Duke struck compromises meant to promote prestigious (and costly) research activities and medical advancements while, at the same time, cultivating a "home-like" atmosphere on campus and in patients' rooms.[7] Thus, to reckon with new anxieties about Universities' roles and responsibilities, Duke administrators and managers cast college and hospital life in familiar and familial terms. Scholars who have examined this compromise have failed to consider its impact on the formation of the campus community or the relations of labor that made such a community possible. After all, "running an entire self-contained community" required people to perform the vital reproductive functions – the maternal side of *in loco parentis* - of that community.[8] By exploring the experiences of the large, and growing, number of people

[5] "Editorials: Ferment," *The Duke Chronicle*, Dec. 17, 1954, 2.

[6] For the emphasis on the "collegiate ideal" in the period, see Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University* (New York: Knopf, 1962); Laurence Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965); Arthur M. Cohen, *The Shaping of American Higher Education: Emergence and Growth of the Contemporary System* (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 1998), 120-122; and Steven Diner, *Universities and Their Cities: Urban Higher Education in America* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017).

[7] Theodore Minah to Mrs. James Hutcheson, Feb. 18, 1955, Box 44, Theodore W. Minah Records and Records, DU Archives.

[8] Jack Edmonds, "Maintenance Department Performs Multiple Tasks," *The Duke Chronicle*, May 7, 1954. For a discussion of the typical meaning of 'in loco parentis,' see Rudolph, *The American College and University*, 243; John C. Hogan and Mortimer D. Schwartz, "In Loco Parentis in the United States, 1765-1985," *The Journal of Legal History* 8, no. 3 (1987): 260-274.

employed to actually perform such labor, this chapter reveals how universities became sites of working-class, not just middle-class, creation.[9]

Duke thus became a public household. That is, the university needed large numbers of service workers to perform reproductive – household – labors for the university to function. And the performance of those functions helped ease the minds of patients, students, and the public who were uncertain about the legitimacy of these new colossal institutions. Economic and labor historians have noted the ways that other pioneering "service" enterprises adapted and operationalized established racial and gender codes to explain new industries or economic models.[10] For instance, as Walmart began to expand in the 1930s and 1940s, the company hired large numbers of rural, white, female, middle-aged, first-time workers to serve customers and a cadre of younger white men to supervise them. The company suggested that this gendered and hierarchical work structure reflected "natural" family relations, and equated the work performed by their associates with traditional "family values" of Christian service and caring.[11] But the public households studied by Bethany Moreton and others were organized entirely around characters in only one vision of the idealized white nuclear family. In contrast, Duke embraced the full complement of roles

[9] For a focus on universities as creators of a middle-class in the twentieth century see David O. Levine, *The American College and the Culture of Aspiration, 1915-1940* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986).

[10] See Eileen Boris and Jennifer Klein, *Caring for America : Home Health Workers in the Shadow of the Welfare State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Kathleen Barry, *Femininity in Flight: A History of Flight Attendants* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Erin Hatton, *The Temp Economy: From Kelly Girls to Permatemps in Postwar America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011); and Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart: The Making of Christian Free Enterprise* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

[11] Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart*. This happened in non-service industries as well. The Boeing Corporation used notions of the "Boeing family," of brotherhood, and of loyalty to ease supervisory challenges and maintain positive labor relations while navigating market changes. See Polly Myers, *Capitalist Family Values: Gender, Work, and Corporate Culture at Boeing* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015).

characteristic of the middle-class Southern home.[12] Duke's would be a household made up not only by stern father-managers and kindly mother-supervisors, but also, and most importantly, by black servants who performed the intimate work of feeding and cleaning up for the University's service recipients. Unlike the "New South" boosters of an earlier era who sought to distance themselves from the echoes of earlier times, the knowledge economy built the rhetoric and scripts of "Old South" social relations into its very foundation.[13]

This chapter explores the experiences of several key figures and individuals who comprised Duke's public household. It focuses especially on the black men and women who performed much of the daily work of cleaning, feeding, and caring and highlights their voices wherever possible. But it looks also at the white women who dominated the supervisory ranks in these fields, and whose racialized and gendered class position was distinct from those whom they oversaw. Student employees also appear, mostly in the context of their labor in the dining halls, which distinguished them from "regular" employees. Finally, managers and university administrators played a significant role in constructing the ideal of the public household and shaping its daily practice.

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[12] It should be noted that the use of household servants was not reserved to the South, though the arrangement died out more quickly in the North. Though northern servants were largely immigrant European women until the early 20th century, when it became more common to employ black women, similar patterns of class tension played out there. Working-class white homes, at least in the South, often made use of hired domestic help. So, most students at Duke would have likely understood the stereotypes of the domestic worker. See, among others, Elizabeth Clark-Lewis, *Living In, Living Out: African American Domestics in Washington, D.C., 1910-1940* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994); Rebecca Sharpless, *Cooking in Other Women's Kitchens: Domestic Workers in the South, 1865-1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010). Harvard and Yale employed mostly Irish immigrant workers in these jobs. See Morton and Phyllis Keller, *Making Harvard Modern: The Rise of America's University* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); and Deborah Sue Elkin, "Labor and the Left: The Limits of Acceptable Dissent at Yale University, 1920s to 1950s (PhD diss., Yale University, 1995). Neither text discusses the ideological frameworks of their work, however, so comparisons there are not yet possible.

[13] For a discussion of the New South vision for Durham and the self-conscious efforts of the region's boosters to differentiate themselves from the 'Old South,' see Janiewski, *Sisterhood Denied;* and Leslie Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham: Gender, Class, and Black Community Development in the Jim Crow South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

But the idealized relations of Duke's public household were as illusory as those of the private household on which it was modeled. As the protesting male students who sent the angry telegram suggested, the University also reproduced the very social tensions that shaped the family relations they sought to emulate. Furthermore, the massive postwar expansion of higher education and hospital care made it more expensive to provide students and patients with personal attention. Most importantly, at several key moments, employee discontent threatened to ruin this idealized vision of "home-like" campus life. But rather than yield to these pressures, Duke administrators, managers, and even clients adapted these racialized frameworks to so-called modern business practices.

"THIS THING CALLED....HOME": THE PERFORMANCE OF RACE AND THE MAKING OF A PUBLIC HOUSEHOLD[14]

As Duke finally completed the massive construction project meant to "launch" it to world-class status in 1930, it confronted some of the social and practical challenges that other universities also faced. Across the country, administrators sought to satisfy anxious parents' concerns about social and moral development while appeasing student's desire to enjoy the college experience of the era, whether that demanded an intellectual retreat or a raucous good time. Following nationwide trends in higher education, the new Duke University embraced a residential college model that placed extra-curricular student activities at its center. Some colleges had once required male and female students to perform some of the college's domestic labor, but that requirement had largely fallen to student protests by the early 20th century.[15] Instead, as Duke accepted the burden of providing the material and social as well

[14] "What Is This Thing Called…Home," *The Chanticleer* (1953), 354.

[15] Helen Leftowitz Horowitz, *Alma Mater: Design and Experience in the Women's Colleges from the Nineteenth-Century Beginnings to the 1930s* (New York: Knopf, 1984), 205.

as intellectual sustenance of life, it turned to outside laborers to perform that work. Duke's new size exacerbated the challenges this endeavor raised. Already in 1911, donor Benjamin Duke marveled at the number of students at Trinity College, commenting that it was "almost impossible to *take care* of them."[16] Enrollments had only mushroomed since then.

Scholars, like commentators in those years, have almost exclusively conceived of *in loco parentis* in disciplinary terms. But acting "in the style of a parent" brought reproductive as well as disciplinary duties. In fact, the two aims were often overlapping. When asked to describe student life in 1932, for instance, Dean of Students William Wannamaker highlighted the work of the "good women" – white women - in charge of the maids, who were tasked with monitoring the quality of the care students received as much as their behavior.[17] These racialized codes were deliberate. Duke's white housekeepers were at once supervising black servants and looking out for the well-being of white children: they were stand-in mothers.

Managers and administrators had an expansive vision of the role of these caring functions in college life. This view was promoted perhaps most forcefully by the school's long-time Dining Hall Manager, Theodore 'Ted' Minah. Because of his longevity and his loquaciousness, Minah was a key figure shaping the campus community for decades.[18] For Minah and other managers, the services they provided students and patients taught "important social graces," promoting education and refinement in their personal as well as

[16] Benjamin Duke, quoted in Robert Durden, *The Launching of Duke University: 1924-1949* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 13. Emphasis added.

[17] Wannamaker to Zumbrunnen, Dean of Students, Southern Methodist University, Box 6, Wannamaker Papers.

[18] Minah served in that capacity from 1946-1974 and wrote widely about his role.

intellectual lives.[19] Along with faculty, infrastructure, and heritage, Minah held up a robust "food service program" as one of the four pillars of a world-class university.[20]

Duke's new hospital also began operating as a more holistic service institution. Initially, Duke Hospital offered comparatively few services to its patients, reflecting both its gradual launch and the prevailing style of medical care at the time.[21] When it opened in 1930, the Hospital employed one hundred and eighty-six individuals to serve its four hundred and fifty-six beds. Most of these workers were physicians, medical students, and nurses. Only thirty-one employees, or sixteen percent, were classified as non-medical staff.[22] Donald Love, one of the hospital's first non-medical employees, later remembered the catch-all nature of jobs at the hospital: he cleaned the walls and polished the floors to prepare for the opening, organized the linen room, and was "called in to help" in the sewing department from time to time.[23] He even had to get "some of the construction workers I knew" to help with last minute preparations.[24] But soon the number of people employed by the hospital grew. Workers in the new hospital laundry, food service, and housekeeping services were tasked with providing not just clean sheets or healthful food, but also "the extra touch that

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[19] "Narrative Description," Gilbert-Addoms Competition Submission, 1959, Box 13, Minah Records.

[20] Minah, "University Food Service…The Duke Program," *Inplant Magazine* (Mar. 1961), Box 48, Minah Records.

[21] See Paul Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine* (New York: Basic Books, 1982), 147-157; and Leon Fink and Brian Greenberg, *Upheaval in the Quiet Zone: 1199SEIU and the Politics of Health Care Unionism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 1-28.

[22] Karen Brodkin Sacks, *Caring by the Hour: Women, Work, and Organizing at Duke University Medical Center* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1988), 17. For comparison, service and clerical together (excluding technical) accounted for thirty-five percent of the employees of the hospital in 1966. "Employment Growth," statistical report, Dec. 1967, Box 7, Vice President for Business and Finance Records [VP Records], DU Archives.

[23] Donald Love, "40-Year Employee Remembers When…" *The Intercom*, Nov. 18, 1970, 10.

[24] Ibid.

lifts the spirits."[25] Hospital administrators now considered rising standards of cleanliness, more responsive staff, and quality, prompt food service as necessary components of high-quality, modern medical care.

To find people to perform these daily household labors – to sweep and mop the floors, to prepare the food, to tidy the rooms and make the beds - Duke administrators and managers drew from Durham's black community. The wall around East Campus and the forest surrounding West Campus physically and symbolically isolated Duke from the heart of Durham, projecting an intentional aura of idyllic remove. But the University's efforts to create a self-contained "home-like" atmosphere on its campuses actually drew it into greater contact with and dependency on the outside world. Duke was, of course, a segregated institution with racially restrictive enrollment policies and strictly-enforced, if haphazardly devised, segregated patient areas.[26] But far from barring black people from its campus, leaders in the university and hospital decided they needed them to perform the daily reproductive labors that patients and students increasingly demanded. As a result, black and white intermingled daily in the public corridors and quadrangles and the semi-private dormitories and patient rooms that made up what black service workers would come to call "Dukes."[27]

The university's reliance upon local African Americans to fill service positions in the interwar period reflected local employment patterns and relied on largely informal hiring

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[25] Charles A. Dukes, Director of Alumni Affairs, to Minah, June 6, 1950, Box 43, Minah Records.

[26] "Administrative Conference," Nov. 27, 1931, notes, Box 12, Wilburt Davison Records, Duke University Medical Center Archives.

[27] Quoted in Leah Wise, "Stirring the Pot: Oliver Harvey's Narrative Account of the Struggle to Organize Duke University," (MA thesis, Duke University, 1980), 44.

practices. In Durham, as across the South, many black women, as well as some men, worked in private domestic service.[28] In fact, white administrators and civic leaders seemed to have seen domestic work and work at Duke as largely synonymous. When Laura Smith applied for a job as a maid at the recently renamed Duke University, she listed her references as Mrs. F.S. Aldridge and Mrs. Harvie Branscombe, both wives of professors.[29] Laura may have met the Aldridges and Brancombes through an area social work club, but it is much more likely that she had worked for one of the women in a domestic capacity. Their appearance on Smith's application suggests that administrators saw housekeeping work on campus as an extension of the relations of service labor in the broader community. In 1936, Duke administrators worked together to locate a chauffeur for the Duke family at their behest, and arranged for him to be paid through the university.[30] Furthermore, white civic leaders elsewhere in the state would sometimes reach out to Duke administrators to seek service placements for particular individuals, like "a colored boy who is held in high esteem hereabouts" and whose mother was "the type of domestic that you want to help."[31] Such practices helped these civic leaders demonstrate their largesse to local constituents. They also betrayed the fluidity with which middle-class whites in the region, including Duke's administrators, were coming to view institutional and private service work.

More frequently, Duke relied on members of Durham's black community themselves to enlist and vet the people who staffed its service ranks, relying on familial employment

[28] Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham*.

[29] "Applications, Maids," Oct. 22, 1926, Box 16, Frank C. Brown Papers, DU Archive.

[30] Robert Flowers, Vice President, to W. Stiles, Sept. 2, 1936, Box 8, Robert Lee Flowers Records, DU Archive.

[31] Josh [?] of the *Evening Telegram*, Rocky Mount, NC, to Minah, Sept. 14, 1961, Box 45, Minah Records.

chains and word-of-mouth recruitment. Donald Love recalled that the hospital had no employment office, and that as "the only local person here," he was "called on to bring people in. I finally cleaned the streets of many communities."[32] When one member of a household or social group got a foothold at Duke, he or she often parleyed their job into others for friends and family. Laura Smith applied for the job as a maid at her roommate's urging, who worked as a maid on campus.[33] After beginning a job in housekeeping, George Scarborough Jr. got his wife "a job at Duke and her two boys and her brother a job at Duke."[34] The Duke-employed family unit was common. Donald Love was himself "the second member in a family tradition at Duke."[35] This pattern reflected both the informality and intimacy with which opportunities were apportioned and the financial realities facing Durham's black poor and working-class, whose employment prospects were limited by significant discrimination in the city's other industries. Employees used these policies to leverage their own social connections, managing up to ensure their family's survival. At the same time, such policies allowed the university to maintain its racial hiring practices under the guise of volunteerism.

Like other Southern employers of black men and women, Duke benefitted from the region's dim and racially segregated employment market. Circumstances in Durham were especially bleak. Most Durham textile mills refused to employ African Americans entirely

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[32] Love, "40-Year Employee."

[33] "Applications, Maids," Oct. 22, 1926.

[34] George Scarborough, Jr. by Chris Stewart, Kara Miles, Rhonda Mawhood, May 27, 1993, *Behind the Veil: Documenting African-American Life in the Jim Crow South Collection*, Duke University Archives.

[35] John Myers, "Taking a Closer Look," *The Carolina Times*, Feb. 19, 1972, 2.

until the late 1970s, by which time most of the firms had left the area.[36] The city's other major industry, tobacco, offered limited opportunities that were nevertheless comparatively prized. In fact, students sometimes joked that "if you don't have a maid to sweep the beer cans from your room it's because she's down at the stemmery making more money."[37] However, these jobs tended to be seasonal, and many black men and women in fact combined tobacco work with service employment, since neither guaranteed sufficient wages or hours.[38] Black women in particular were overrepresented in the Durham labor market at mid-century, reflecting in part high rates of female migration to the city since the turn of the century.[39] To Duke administrators, black men and women, barred from most blue-collar work and relegated primarily to private domestic service, represented an exploited, and thus exploitable, labor force. For administrators like hospital superintendent Ross Porter, it just made "good economic sense" to hire them.[40]

However, the racial profile of most of the men and women who cooked and cleaned did not simply reflect Durham's labor market. Instead, it revealed Duke administrators' continued preference for a racialized workforce, which persisted even amid student complaints. During a protest over the food in 1945, students lampooned the administration

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[36] Kathryn M. Silva, "African American Millhands, the Durham Hosiery Mills, and the Politics of Race and Gender in Durham's Textile Industry, 1903-1920," *North Carolina Historical Review* 94, no. 1 (Jan. 2017): 59-88

[37] "This is Durham," *Duke 'n' Duchess* 9, no. 1 (September 1943).

[38] For the seasonal nature of tobacco work, see Janiewski, *Sisterhood Denied*, 113. For evidence that employees combined work in tobacco and in domestic service, see "Case Studies, Mrs. Hattie Williams," union pamphlet, May 13, 1968, Labor Unions Reference Collection, DU Archives.

[39] Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham*, 17, 88-91.

[40] F. Ross Porter, "Need for Trained Negro Practical Nurses in North Carolina," (Durham: Duke University School of Medicine and Duke Hospital, 1955).

for failing to "get some decent niggers" who were "clean," "polite," and had "manners," and demanded that they "replace the colored servers with white servers."[41] Yet, when a Duke alumna and school teacher inquired about the possibility of a part-time waitressing job just three years later, Ted Minah, who had recently taken over the management of the dining facilities, politely informed her that "all of our employees are colored."[42] Facing widespread student discontent with the execution, if not the idea, of a racialized service workforce, Duke administrators brought in a new, more professionally-credentialed management team headed by Minah to tame the unruly employees rather than submit to the students' demands. The racial typing of jobs was so pronounced by the 1940s that the university president could answer concerns from the black community about rumored layoffs by immediately consulting the three departments where African Americans were employed: dining, housekeeping, and the hospital.[43]

Minah's claim that "all of our employees" were black was not entirely accurate. African-Americans made up the vast majority of employees in the university's service departments – housekeeping, dining, laundry, and grounds keeping – but not all of them. However, those departments maintained a clear racial division of labor that isolated and elevated the few white employees who did work there. White women and men worked as dieticians, supervisors, and cashiers in the dining halls and as matrons, housemothers, supervisors and housekeepers in the operations department and laundry. White students also worked in the dining halls, in positions described in greater detail below.

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[41] "Notes in Suggestions Box," 1945, Box 49, Minah Records.

[42] Minah to Miss Audrey O'Brien, June 9. 1949, Box 51, Minah Records.

[43] Flowers to C.C. Spaulding, July 27, 1940, Box 14, Flowers Records.

University administrators adopted the symbolism and rhetoric of middle-class respectability and racialized domestic service in describing the reproductive work done on campus. Managers sometimes used the term "servant" and "maid" interchangeably to describe a range of positions across the campuses.[44] As late as 1959, the staff at the President's house were still being referred to as "servants."[45] Porters in the early hospital served as personal attendants to doctors and administrators, tasked with serving them lunch and helping them with their coats.[46] Overseen by white matrons and gentlemanly administrators both trusted and feared by students, housekeeping and dining workers wore the instantly recognizable uniform of the household domestic worker, as parodied in the yearbook cartoon discussed in this chapter's opening. These workers were required to use formal and deferential titles when addressing students and patients, but they were referred to always by their first names, nicknames, or racialized monikers like "the Ethiopian."[47] One students' letter of thanks to the dining hall staff illustrates the symbolic ways that racial privilege was maintained: it was addressed to "Miss Morgan [a white dietician], Troy, Henry, Lee, and Sam [black cooks]."[48] Students, faculty, and administrators would frequently call older black workers "Uncle," a title supposedly accorded "out of respect for the aged black man" but which had a long-standing discriminatory history.[49] In describing this work and the

[44] Henricksen to Bowers, July 8, 1959, Box 42, A. Hollis Edens Records, DU Archives.

[45] Gerhard Henricksen, Assistant University Treasurer, to H.F. Bowers, Manager of Operations, July 8, 1959, Box 42, Edens Records.

[46] "Job Description, Errand Porter to Dean's Office," n.d., Box 26, Wilburt Davison Records, Duke University Medical Center Archives.

[47] Vernon Sechriest, "Uncle Solomon Woods Exposes Campus Dirt," *The Duke Chronicle*, May 19, 1930.

[48] Minah to Nick Hennessee III, June 9, 1950, Box 45, Minah Records.

[49] Sechriest, "Uncle Solomon Woods." Uncle was a racist moniker used by whites to refer to elderly black men, akin to the mammy trope for women. For the ways that whites and blacks struggled over its usage in the Jim

people who performed it, Duke administrators and students adapted the racialized stereotypes of the domestic worker to a new institutional setting.

Administrators particularly invoked the ideals of middle-class southern gentility when planning and describing the services for Duke's female students. The dining facilities on East Campus were designed "for a table service operation in which the students were served by maids" in order to cultivate the "atmosphere…of a refined Woman's College of The Old South"[50] They likewise took measures to "screen off the kitchen from the girls," lest the dirty work, and the dirty men doing that work, threaten the "gracious atmosphere" and the delicate accoutrements of feminine virtue.[51] Female students in the prewar period likewise stepped into the established scripts of domestic service, parroting the relations of friendly paternalism modeled in the middle-class home. They sometimes threw Christmas parties for the children of dormitory maids, perpetuating a kindly but fraught tradition marked by ritualistic gift giving and ostentatious displays of maternalistic generosity.[52]

Student newspaper and yearbook coverage of service workers drew from racist tropes of black servility and reiterated workers' status as outsiders in the university community.

Crow South, see Jennifer Ritterhouse, *Growing Up Jim Crow: How Black and White Southern Children Learned Race* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2006). For the "Uncle" stereotype, see Kenneth Goings, *Mammy and Uncle Mose: Black Collectibles and American Stereotyping* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

[50] Minah to Mr. Charles Huestis, Sept. 11, 1970, Box 5, VP Records.

[51] Minah to Mr. Stewart Rogers, Six Associates, Aug. 8, 1955, Box 11, Minah Records; "Narrative Description," Gilbert-Addoms Competition Entry, 1959, Box 13, Minah Records.

[52] "Yule Tide Spirit Reigns Supreme On East Campus," *The Duke Chronicle*, Dec. 14, 1932; "YWCA Sponsors Yuletide Program," *The Duke Chronicle*, Dec. 15, 1944; "Bearing Gifts We Traverse Afar," *The Duke Chronicle*, Dec. 17, 1954. For the use of 'gifts' in relations between white women and domestic workers, see Sharpless, *Cooking in Other Women's Homes*, 77-78; and Susan Tucker, ed., *Telling Memories Among Southern Women: Domestic Workers and their Employers in the Segregated South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Press, 1988), 145-183.

White reporters offered the occasional profile of "Big Bill," "Sim," "Ralph," "Sol," "Josephine," or any number of other characters "beloved" by the students.[53] The reporters mimicked in exaggerated fashion the speech patterns they associated with poor black southerners. One long-time janitor was quoted describing how he had "been wid the college since I was bon an'" was going to stay "wid 'em 'til I die."[54] Another was praised for his "never-failing smile and cheery 'Yes suh.'"[55] These employees were very occasionally described in ways that emphasized their competence, but were far more likely to be characterized by stereotypical features ("large dome, big flanged lips, stubby white teeth, and great lazy eyes") or an obsequiously jovial demeanor ("singing, whistling and laughing," "loyal, faithful, and ever cheerful," having "not forsaken his white employers".)[56] "Big Bill," an employee named Bill Jones, laughingly reassured one interviewer for the alumni magazine that he had not "done a thousand words worth of work in my whole life."[57] While Jones might have been jesting at the expectations of the student interviewer, that interviewer seems to have taken Jones's joke as confirmation of a stereotyped easy and carefree servant

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[53] See Jim Ellsasser, "Big Bill Mainstay of Dining Halls," *The Duke Chronicle*, Sept. 24, 1958; "Official Car Loses Driver," *The Duke Chronicle*, May 7, 1955; Yandell Smith, "Mr. Ralph Sells Shines by High Pressure Sales Methods," *The Duke Chronicle*, Dec. 15, 1945.

[54] "Knight of the Broom Has Served Long – George Wall Claims to Have Been Janitor for Forty-Five Years," *The Duke Chronicle,* Feb. 15, 1928.

[55] Norman Nelson, "Negro Janitor Claims Title of Oldest Employee at Duke," clipping, Box 48, Minah Records.

[56] Willie Harstine, "Ralph Does More Than Shine Scuffed Loafers," *The Duke Chronicle*, Oct. 2, 1956; Bill Tracy, "Bill Jones," *Duke Peer* (Summer 1956), Box 45, Minah Records; Mona Morgan, "Eulogy for Carl Rogers," n.d., Altvater Scrapbook, Duke University Medical Center Archives; "Knight of Broom Has Served Long." These stereotypes of the docile, child-like, and faithful servant were deployed frequently in private domestic service. See Ritterhouse, *Growing Up Jim Crow*, 14, 25; David Katzman, *Seven Days a Week: Women and Domestic Service in Industrializing America* (New York: Oxford University press, 1978), 188, 190-1; Sharpless, *Cooking in Other Women's Kitchens*, 164.

[57] Tracy, "Bill Jones."

life. By framing campus life through the familiar tropes of thankful black servants, students asserted themselves as benefactors of, instead of benefiters from, black labor.

Student coverage of campus 'personalities' also took great pains to position those workers as non-threatening, which perhaps betrayed a discomfort with the presence of black workers in intimate spaces despite their purported beloved status. Postures of deference were key: Ralph Woods, the oft-profiled shoe-shine "literally kneeled at the feet of the best of" men.[58] Asked about his political ideas, Ralph carefully – "naively" - demurred: "Vote for de man, that's all."[59] In stark contrast, Woods was elsewhere described as a "high pressure salesman" who taunted male students about the state of their shoes and alleged that he had "not eaten in eight days and is hungry enough to eat leather."[60] Whereas his sales tactics could be played for laughs, Woods dared not joke about politics. Likewise, one janitor made sure to mention that "his father 'never got a whopping' durin' the whole slavery,'" a statement that drew on the fraught memory of slavery while suggesting that he, like his father, was obedient and trustworthy.[61] Considered together with laughing references to students "lynching" or playing "pranks" on janitors and "bothering" maids, these pieces sketch the limits of "friendly" relations and carry latent threats to presumptuous employees.[62]

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[58] Harstine, "Ralph Does More Than Shine Scuffed Loafers."

[59] Ibid. Woods was also a graduate of the North Carolina College for Negroes (later North Carolina Central), a fact mentioned in only one of the numerous profiles written about him.

[60] Smith, "Mr. Ralph Sells Shines by High Pressure Sales Methods."

[61] "Uncle Solomon Woods Exposes Campus Dirt."

[62] "No Title," *The Duke Chronicle*, Oct. 14, 1941; "Uncle Solomon Woods Exposes Campus Dirt." See also Jack Edmonds, "Carnations for Ma," *Peer*, Summer 1954. For the threat of sexual violence against black women in household service, see Katzman, *Seven Days a Week*, 216-8.

To students, these employees served at their pleasure. Black employees thus occupied a deeply precarious status on campus.

These student-produced profiles of black employees were fraught with interpretive complexities. An employee would likely feel uncomfortable speaking candidly to students or administrators with both social and fiscal authority, especially when the interviewer interrupted the employee's work for a brief, ostensibly humorous chat. "'I likes them all,'" a maid named Josephine reassured one reporter in one highly ambiguous source "as she went on with her work of sweeping the hall."[63] These soothing reassurances, full of "high praise for Duke men" who "treats me nice," likely say more about student preoccupation with attitudes of workers than they do about those attitudes themselves.[64] Students' determination to portray black service workers as jovial and thankful reveals both the persistence of tropes about contented black servility and the fragility of their own self-perception. Students sought constant reassurance of their own magnanimity. But employees might also have used these encounters for their own ends, manipulating or making jokes of student expectations.[65]

Faculty and administrators also frequently spoke about employees in stereotypical ways. In a memoir published in 1954, one accomplished English professor wrote at length of the "simple, quiet, faithful soul[s]" who "served the institution."[66] Repeating the high praise

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[63] "Says Co-Eds Act Like Real Ladies: Josephine, Colored Maid at Southgate for Years, Believes Young Women Fall in Love Too Often," *The Duke Chronicle*, Oct. 3, 1928.

[64] Ellsasser, "'Big Bill' Mainstay of Dining Halls;" "Knight of the Broom Has Served Long."

[65] I borrow here from Robin D. G. Kelley's work on 'infrapolitics' and Tera Hunter. See Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (New York: Free Press, 1996); and Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors After the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997). For further discussion of subtle resistance, see later section in this chapter.

[66] Hersey Everett Spence, *"I Remember": Recollections and Reminiscences of Alma Mater* (Durham: The Seeman Printery Inc., 1954), 139.

offered by long-time president William Few about one such employee, Professor Hersey Spence said that "Although his skin was black, his soul was white."[67] When another president was preparing for a medical procedure, Spence remembered one "darkey" protesting "with a tear in his eyes…'Marse Kilgo, would you mind letting them try that on me first. Old Jack don't amount to much and if it kills him, it won't make much difference, but you is needed around here.'"[68] But for all his efforts to portray the "simple, quiet, faithful" servant, Spence also recounted tales of a janitor singing his favorite tune, "I Shall Not be Moved," and another who "could 'take off' [imitate humorously] almost every outstanding person on the faculty or administration."[69] Whether these moments reflected an effort to poke at faculty's self-importance, white Duke community members like Spence seemed unwilling or unable to consider such service workers with any measure of complexity.

For students and administrators, the father-son pair of Frank and George Frank Wall served as archetypal examples of the Old South servant ideals they hoped to recreate on campus. According to university reporting, the two had worked at Trinity in Randolph County, and had "become so attached to the institution that [they] followed it to Durham."[70] George Frank Wall, the son, had supposedly worked at Duke since he "was big enough to handle a broom," following along and "helping his father sweep floors and make beds."[71]

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[67] Ibid., 137.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid., 138.

[70] "Knight of the Broom Has Served Long."

[71] Norman Nelson, "Negro Janitor Claims Title of Oldest Employee at Duke," clipping, Box 48, Minah Records.

Reports of both men referred to them with the moniker of "Uncle George" and celebrated their loyalty to Duke. A former president of Trinity recalled that he "always valued 'Uncle George's [sic] type of character for its fidelity and simple devotion."[72] A student profile claimed that the younger Wall's loyalty "to Duke could be no more enthusiastic even if he were an alumnus."[73] And he seemed particularly willing to play into this characterization. When he donated 100 dollars to the university in 1946, Wall noted his gratitude for the "valuable instruction" he received "through the constant, consistent proximity to a great institution of higher learning and its people and, above all, that he has at all times received only the kindest consideration possible."[74]

But the Walls' history also told another story, one marked by more complexity, possibly even coercion. The elder Wall was born a slave to the grandfather of a Trinity physics professor, Charles Edwards. Wall likely worked for Edwards on Trinity's campus for years after emancipation, for it was there that Trinity College President Braxton Craven met the "'bound boy'" Wall, "secured his release" in the 1870s, and made him an employee of the university.[75] No records exist to sketch the terms of that employment, but the language in a 1930 Alumni Record article suggests continued feelings of ownership: at fourteen, Wall became the "personal selection" of Craven, and he worked "in the continuous service of the institution" until he was "released from all duty in his last years."[76] Moreover, the stories of

[72] "Dr. John Franklin Crowell Pays Tribute to George Wall," *Duke Alumni Register* (Apr. 1930).

[73] Nelson, "Negro Janitor Claims Title."

[74] "Negro Kitchen Employee Bequeaths Sum to Duke," Durham Morning Herald, n.d., clipping, Box 48, Minah Records.

[75] "George Wall's Example of Faithfulness and Devotion," *Duke Alumni Register* (Mar. 1930).

[76] Ibid.

both father and son working at Duke as "boys" highlight the roots of their work in traditions of personal service.[77] George Frank Wall, said to be so "attached" to Trinity that he tagged along on its move, was actually responsible for rounding up faculty livestock and supervising their transportation to Durham.[78] And though a "bequest," the younger Wall's donation was made while he was still alive and working at Duke; a timing that suggests he may have wanted to see his years of work celebrated. His caveat that the "valuable instruction" he received came not from "books" but simply from "proximity" points to a stinging contradiction in the university community, even if that was not his intent.[79]

Encounters between student or administrative reporters and service workers were doubly mediated because employees well understood the risks of resistance. When facing what they perceived as employee insolence, Duke students often responded with vitriol. In the suggestion box instituted after the 1945 food riot, several student letters criticized one black female server for her stingy portions and "grudge against white people."[80] She needed to be reformed or retired "before she gets killed!!!," they warned.[81] The many complaints about this one server suggests that she may have, in fact, refused to abide the students' expectations of service. She may have given voice to a growing wartime discontent with the conditions of her labor, as some scholars have found with black workers elsewhere.[82] Or she

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[77] Ibid.; Nelson, "Negro Janitor Claims Title."

[78] "Knight of the Broom Serves Long;" Nelson, "Negro Janitor Claims Title."

[79] "Negro Kitchen Employee Bequeaths Sum."

[80] "Notes in Suggestions Box," Box 49, Minah Records.

[81] Ibid.

[82] For one example of the rising tide of black resistance during the war, see Laurie Green, *Battling the Plantation Mentality: Memphis and the Black Freedom Struggle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 47-80.

may simply have refused to embrace the servile behavior demanded by wartime students and Navy officers, who were then being housed on campus. Whether complaints about the woman were justified, the racialized language in the suggestions reveal that students saw the problems of service through the prism of race relations, and reacted with commensurate offense.

If employee resistance could threaten to disrupt the racial and gendered order, so too could the presence of students working alongside black service employees. To combat this, administrators and managers sought to protect and police the boundaries between them in ways that reinforced their differences. Starting in the 1930s, male and female student employees entered service in the dining halls as bus boys or waitresses. Most remained in these positions for the duration of their studies. Black employees served in these positions, too, but they were never assigned to the same shifts as student employees. Young male students who impressed the dining hall manager could be promoted into positions as waiters and then, for a very select few, head waiter, where they oversaw their fellow student-employees. Thus, there was a separate organizational structure for students. In the early postwar period, new dining manager, Ted Minah, instituted another promotional step, advancing some students to higher supervisory roles, where they oversaw fellow students as well as regular employees.[83] After only two or three years, then, these part-time student employees were given the authority to "maintain discipline" and expected to supervise long-term and full-time employees "so that he gets the maximum work from them, and yet

[83] Minah to Reverend George Ehlhardt, Apr. 18, 1950, Box 41, Minah Records; "Letters to the Chronicle: Facts and Figures on Union Prices," *The Duke Chronicle*, Mar. 14, 1947. It was not until the late 1950s that Minah began promoting black employees into supervisory roles, in response to employee and community pressure.

maintains a high level of morale."[84] Thus, the white male student employees were vested with the authority of apprentice bosses, marked as a separate and distinct category of employee.

Administrators and managers like Minah described white male student employees using gendered and racialized language that further distinguished them from regular employees. Student employees were praised for being everything "we like to believe the young American man should be" and embodied the "definition of a southern gentleman."[85] Their role as supervisors served as an education in manhood. Minah claimed that "my happiest work…is working with the boys – men," positioning male student employees both as recipients of his largesse and on the precipice of true, respectable manhood.[86] As they worked part-time as waiters and supervisors and were promoted swiftly into positions of increasing authority, Minah and other Duke administrators saw in these boy-men supervisors the future of middle-class, male authority and one of Duke's singular achievements. In praising the quality of these student supervisors, Minah frequently noted the tenor of their relations with the University's "regular – [black] - employees." For the most part, a good supervisor might "seem to be distant, [but] he treats them with respect and civility."[87] This distant but orderly relationship with the "regular" employees seemed to exemplify Minah's vision of the "southern gentleman."

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[84] Minah, "James Burnett recommendation," Feb. 25, 1958, Box 41, Minah Records; Minah, "Recommendation for Robert Hall," Appointments Office, Nov. 25, 1952, Box 45, Minah Records.

[85] Minah, "Recommendation for Malcolm Crawford," Nov. 1, 1951, Box 41, Minah Records; Minah, "Recommendation for Thomas Briggs Henderson, Jr.," Appointments Office, Feb. 6, 1951, Box 41, Minah Records.

[86] Cindy Smith, "Campus Eats 2.5 Million Union Meals Each Year," *The Duke Chronicle*, May 6, 1959.

[87] Minah to Dean Liston Pope, Divinity School, Yale, Jan. 19, 1955, Box 43, Minah Records.

The color line proved flexible enough to adapt when student employees threatened to step over it. Minah seemed particularly impressed if not surprised with those few students who eschewed work as waiters to take positions in the all black dish-washing crew, crediting them with "motivate[ing] the other employees" and establishing "a high espirit de corps [sic]."[88] On a temporary, experiential sojourn into the world of manual labor, these male students were celebrated for setting the appropriate work culture for the university's regular employees. On the other hand, an alumna who applied for a regular waitressing job in 1949 was told that the dining hall only employed black women.[89] That she could have worked in the dining halls while a student at Duke but not thereafter suggests both the maintenance of a strict racial line among "regular" employees and the simultaneous protection from blackening afforded the white student population. Securely marked as a different *sort* of employee, student workers could more freely traverse the boundary between black and white jobs.

While black employees were relegated to the low-paying service positions, the few white workers in dining and housekeeping were exclusively employed as supervisors and clerical workers. White men occupied the highest positions as dining hall manager, and building and hospital superintendents, working with senior University administrators to set prices and debate policy. But while the male dining hall manager maintained a relatively high profile among students, white female front-line managers, dieticians, and housekeepers often

[88] Minah, "Recommendation for Edward Carey," Dec. 5, 1956, and Minah, "Wesley Allen McGraw, Jr.," Appointments Office, Sept. 30, 1953, Box 41, Minah Records.

[89] Minah to Miss Audrey O'Brien, June 9, 1949, Box 51, Minah Records.

carried out the daily work of supervision. Their gendered whiteness bestowed on them the "responsibility, skill, and tact," and control required to perform such duties.[90]

The dining halls recruited dietician-supervisors that administrators expected would ensure the cultural as well as culinary standards of the dining "family": young, often married, educated, white women. Though a very few front-line supervisors in the dining halls were promoted from the ranks in the late 1950s, for the most part, Dining Manager Minah argued firmly that the "work is of such a specialized nature [that] some form of training is necessary."[91] In correspondence with a Labor Department Women's Bureau economist, Minah clarified that the gendered nature of his supervisory ranks was no accident. The Duke Dining Halls "could not operate without" women because "a woman's touch is needed in order to get a product that is satisfactory and a departure from the old-fashioned system of large quantity industrial feeding."[92] The presence of educated, sophisticated white women who were "attractive, healthy, vivacious" and with "lovely disposition[s] and personalit[ies]" seemed to confer a necessary "prestige and respect to the position" of supervisor in the dining halls.[93] The woman supervisor's job, then, was to oversee the black men and women performing the actual labor of food preparation and service, lending an expertise derived from white feminine gentility to the college dining environment.

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[90] "Cashiers – Job Analysis," n.d., Box 6, Minah Records.

[91] Minah to Mrs. Agnes Mitchell, Labor Economist, Women's Bureau, Mar. 30, 1949, Box 41, Minah Records.

[92] Ibid. Given that these women did not do the cooking, but rather supervised black men and women who did, suggests that her "touch" was closely associated with the image of the southern woman of the house.

[93] Minah to Mildred Kaufman, Director, Division of Nutrition, Florida State Board of Health, June 26, 1969, Box 49, Minah Records; Minah to Miss Ellen Penn, Chairman, Department of Institution Management, University of North Carolina Greensboro, Jan. 18, 1961, Box 48, Minah Records; Minah to Miss Esther Ratliff, Head of Dietetic Department, Duke Medical Center, July 21, 1959.

These women supervisors were deemed appropriate proxies for Duke's authority because their educational and social backgrounds so obviously distinguished them from the employees under their charge. In recruiting one candidate for a position, Minah detailed the "many opportunities for a full social life" afforded by the proximity of the graduate schools and hospital, positioning her socially within the professional class on campus.[94] He praised another long-term supervisor for her generosity toward the employees, marveling that she never "seem[ed] to try to be superior to them in spite of the fact that her background has been one of culture and refinement."[95] Though subject to the whims of students and patients, the whiteness and class position of the dining supervisors granted these women entrée into the larger university milieu.

While dining supervisors and dietitians frequently came to the University with degrees or, at the very least, experience in home economics or institutional food service, white women who worked as supervisors in campus and hospital housekeeping were far less likely to be formally credentialed. Instead, these "matrons" and "housekeepers" drew more exclusively on the qualifications afforded by the social connotations of white womanhood. Matrons Mrs. Lessie Long, Mrs. Laurie Wethingon, and Mrs. Catherine Smart were "housekeeper-mothers," or more properly "Mothers of West [Campus]."[96] But, besides their coworker Maude Tyson, who had experience as a nurse, all were widowed older women

[94] Minah to Miss Pauline Clyde, May 5, 1959, Box 41, Minah Records.

[95] Minah to Mr. J. Crockett Parnell, Superintendent, Hillsborough County Board of Public Instruction, May 10, 1957, Box 41, Minah Records.

[96] Margaret Harrell, "Housekeepers Expect the Unexpected: Mothers for West," *The Duke Chronicle*, Nov. 4, 1959.

from working-class backgrounds without any "professional" qualifications.[97] At the same time, white female supervisors also seem to have embraced the image of gentility and respect associated with reproductive work at Duke's caliber of institution. Emphasizing the environment of respectability and renown cultivated at a prestigious university, they insisted that the work of supervising housekeeping at Duke offered "more personal" satisfaction and carried "more humanitarian value."[98]

As supervisors, these women were vested with considerable authority over customers and employees alike. It is no surprise, then, that they sometimes found themselves the target of student unrest, though usually in ways that reflected their particular racialized class position. During periods of resistance to "dormitory regulations" like in 1934, the matrons were sometimes accused of masterminding the surveillance schemes, or even actually rifling through students' belongings.[99] These male students could not abide the intrusion into their privacy by a university employee. Yet, the students' uprising also carried the tenor of a truculent child on the cusp of manhood, rebelling against the authority of a mother figure.

At the same time, student complaints frequently revealed that they recognized the gendered racial dynamics that characterized service supervision at Duke. When a student publication carried a satirical description of the appearance of the Oak Room's white supervisor in 1954. Minah quickly came to her defense, objecting to the repeated allusions to

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[97] Long's husband was a foreman; Wethington's a carpenter; and Smart's a hospital worker. Smart and her husband also seem to have taken in boarders, and she likewise had experience in hospital work. All three also lived in working-class neighborhoods, two in the poorest white neighborhood of Edgemont. *Hill's Durham (Durham County, NC) City Directory* (Richmond: Hill Directory Co., 1935-1955).

[98] Shelton Smith, "Mrs. Scoggins is only Executive Housekeeper in Southern AHA," *Intercom* (Feb. 1954).

[99] See introductory anecdote; Al Webb, "West Men Object to Rooming Checks," *The Duke Chronicle*, Nov. 3, 1953.

her appearance. However, in his haste to extract an apology for the sexualization of his supervisor, he glossed over the description of her as "barking" at her "Negro wait staff" and "carrying a slave whip."[100] By subjecting the supervisor to a parodic critique of her appearance and sexual attractiveness, the author of the farce hoped to undermine her authority and supposed respectability. But he also inadvertently called attention to the racial politics of supervision at Duke, casting the white female supervisor in the tenuous but threatening role as mistress *and* overseer.

THREATS FROM INSIDE THE IDYLLIC PUBLIC HOUSEHOLD: EMPLOYEE RESISTANCE AND STUDENT DISCOMFORT

For many administrators, students, and patients, this public household mapped remarkably well onto their own expectations for the division of reproductive labor. They constructed a narrative around service work, and hired certain employees to perform that work, which justified those workers' presence on campus and lent the institution a degree of social legitimacy. However, the social relations within Duke's "public household" were rife with complexity and even tension, raising concerns about its long-term viability.

Students and patients sometimes confronted administrators and managers, objecting to the intimacy and responsibility afforded black service workers. For some members of the white university community, the very presence of black men and women conjured the specter of crime and violence. Black men and women had to combat pernicious notions of theft that followed them as they worked. When the dining halls began checking employees' belongings as they departed, manager Ted Minah claimed the new policy was instituted "in order to protect [them] from all suspicion" and save them from being "embarrassed" if the all-white

[100] Jerry Fuller, "I Eat There Often," *Peer* (1954), Box 23, Minah Records.

police force stopped them and demanded they open their bags.[101] Out-of-place black men faced an even more dangerous stigma and were asked not to "walk around areas of [East] campus after dark and thereby cause needless suspicion."[102] The university's service employees, necessary to the literal sustenance of student and patient life, still could not escape the suspicion that adhered to black bodies and black minds in white spaces.

Moreover, service employees' work engendered an intimacy that threatened to unsettle white notions of propriety. The suspicion with which some white patients and students viewed Duke's black service workers bore strong similarities to the white middle-class home.[103] Hospital maids and practical nurses bathed patients, performed enemas, applied ointments, and cared for the flowers in a patient's room. Tight quarters and personal contact often challenged boundaries of comfort and autonomy for both parties. After a patient complained that one practical nurse "use[d] too much perfume," hospital administrators demanded she exercise more restraint in the future.[104] When one student reported that he "personally" observed one of the dishwashing "boys" "wipe his forehead," he acted as a secondary check on the behavior and appearance of the staff and another mechanism of supervision.[105]

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[101] Minah, "Notice to All Employees," n.d., Box 41, Minah Records. Rumors of janitors "going through the contents" of student belongings often prompted investigations, though rarely were those rumors substantiated. Similarly, students were urged to avoid theft by keeping their valuable belongings in their closets, which maids could not access.

[102] Minah to Whitford, Oct. 17, 1957, Box 51, Minah Records.

[103] See Thavolia Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Sharpless, *Cooking in Other Women's Kitchens*, 154-6; Katzman, *Seven Days a Week*, 16.

[104] Albert J. Malik, "Hospital Opinion Poll," report, Jan. 13, 1953, Box 23, Davison Records.

[105] Lu Hamel to Minah, handwritten letter, n.d., Box 45, Minah Records.

Likewise, by virtue of her service in and out of the dormitories, a campus maid might know the sleeping habits, personal hygiene routines, interpersonal dramas, and much more about the students. For male students, as the opening anecdote of this chapter suggests, this posed a particularly troubling threat to their masculinity. On the one hand, a maid might introduce a freshman to an alumnus that coincidentally shared his name. On the other, she might "systematically examine the living habits of the men students" and report them to the administration.[106] Female students offered fewer complaints about this intimacy, with many appearing to view certain female staffers through stereotypically racialized and familiar roles as mammies. The maid Josephine was a frequent confidante of female students who regaled her with stories of "their love affairs," a trusted interlocutor precisely because of her social distance.[107]

Complaints reflected students' and patients' occasional discomfort about the power of intimate spaces to disrupt racial hierarchies, but they also served to discipline the behavior of black employees. By remaining publicly vigilant about suspicious behavior or unsanitary personal hygiene, students and patients concerned about what they perceived as their own vulnerability could reassert power and control over black service workers. Their behavior – waffling between insecurity and despotism – reveals the tensions embedded in the structure of service work in the modern university community.

But the workers themselves posed a far more serious threat to the promise of a peaceful household. Many refused to acquiesce to the values of racialized servility used to describe their labor. For the most part, service workers at Duke expressed their

[106] "New Supervisor System Set Up for West Rooms," *The Duke Chronicle*, Oct. 30, 1953.

[107] "Says Co-Eds Act Like Real Ladies."

dissatisfaction through the "infrapolitics" that historians like Robin D.G. Kelley have found in other low-income or vulnerable working-class communities.[108] As Bill Jones and Ralph Woods rehearsed racial stereotypes in excessive and exaggerated fashion, they played up the absurdity of those stereotypes. When Jones protested with a smile that he had not "done a thousand words worth of work in my whole life," we can imagine also a knowing wink or sarcastic tone, especially when we consider that he was elsewhere described as having "the sureness of a self-satisfied and secure individual, and the business ability of an executive."[109] Woods might defer on politics, but he was known for insulting the appearance of male students, suggesting they looked more "like a maintenance crew" than intellectuals.[110] Moreover, frequent student and administrator complaints about unpleasant behavior, slow service, impertinence and uncooperative natures suggest some of the other ways that employees pressed at the strictures of their campus positions.

Service employees proved particularly determined to challenge the notions of "loyalty" so valued by administrators and so central to visions of black service work. Absenteeism was common, and could cause considerable disruption to student and hospital life.[111] When they found the relations on campus too fraught or realized they "couldn't make no money," employees simply took their labor elsewhere, contributing to a persistent and, to administrators, troubling, pattern of turnover.[112] Administrators were particularly frustrated

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[108] Kelley, *Race Rebels*.

[109] Ellsasser, "'Big Bill' Mainstay of Dining Halls."

[110] Harstine, "Ralph Does More than Shine Scuffed Loafers."

[111] Helen Mercner, "Officials Condemn Coed Food Display," *The Duke Chronicle*, Dec. 15, 1945; Minah to Huestis, Sept. 14, 1967, Box 27, Minah Records; Mary Whiting Thomas, "Too Many Chiefs and Not Enough Indians," *Intercom*, Aug. 1954.

[112] Arthur Leonard Brodie, interviewed by Chris Stewart, May 28, 1993, *Behind the Veil*.

with the young black women working as waitresses who they accused of treating the job as a "temporary" sojourn.[113] Whether intended as direct resistance to Duke's labor relations, their chronic absenteeism and turnover undermined administrator and students' treasured notions of employee loyalty.

Employees who remained could sometimes reverse the direction of responsibility or turn loyalty into relations of exchange. Some employees, particularly black men, made strategic use of their proximity to cultivate relations of responsibility with powerful white members of Duke's leadership. In this, they were not unlike the city's black upper-class who used white patronage to "upbuild" black Durham.[114] Though often difficult to parse and rife with personal power politics, several prominent black service employees used these relations to insulate themselves from the more egregious expressions of discrimination commonplace on campus.[115] Carl Rogers, who worked as a porter for the dean of the medical school, served so closely with Dean Davison for so long that he was sometimes jokingly called the "Assistant Dean." Though the suggestion of authority was obviously laughingly conferred, Davison once recalled Rogers audaciously demanding "'that we build a house.' I asked him who was meant by 'we,' and he promptly replied 'you and me.'"[116] After Davison helped Rogers acquire a home in some manner, Rogers followed the same approach when enlisting Davison in his plan to purchase "a far better car than" Davison himself owned.[117] Men like

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[113] Minah, "Suggestions to Managers," n.d., Box 46, Minah Records.

[114] See Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham*.

[115] For a discussion of black workers trying to convert unwanted familiarity into security see Sharpless, *Cooking in Other Women's Kitchens*, 165-6; Katzman, *Seven Days a Week*; and Tucker, *Telling Memories*, 189-242.

[116] "The Assistant Dean," clipping, Sept. 1955, Box 48, Minah Records.

[117] Ibid.

Rogers were sometimes able to use their relationships with powerful administrators or supervisors to parley their decades of "service" into material and social gains that might otherwise have been closed to them. However, these relations rarely challenged the stereotypes that underlay notions of black servility. Student and alumni coverage cast Rogers, for instance, as something of an irrepressible, if ultimately harmless, social climber.

Dormitory maids could sometimes leverage their familiarity with students to protect their jobs. One janitor remembered that the "if a maid got in trouble, she would tell a group of students in that area and four, five or six students would go down and get on the supervisor."[118] Though male students, in particular, periodically became suspicious of the dormitory maids, women students seemed more likely to develop a partiality to their maids.[119] It is possible that this closeness may have been genuine and reciprocal; it was also almost certainly fraught on both sides.[120] Still, service workers were known to use this proximity to their advantage at times.

Employees also undermined the racial relations of authority on campus by focusing on one another rather than their white charges. To the chagrin of supervisors in the hospital and dining facilities who were concerned with employees "grouping and chatting," many employees seem to have valued a collegial and social work atmosphere.[121] Unlike many household workers who toiled in isolation and often at the pleasure of single individuals, the

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[118] Oliver Harvey, quoted in Leah Wise, "Stirring the Pot: Oliver Harvey's Narrative Account of the Struggle to Organize Duke University," (master's thesis, Duke University, 1980), 41.

[119] Ibid.

[120] For a discussion of the complex emotions often at play in an employer-domestic service relationship, see Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom*, 55-56; Katzman, *Seven Days a Week*, 158-9; and Tucker, *Telling Memories*, 13-64.

[121] "Bad, Bad Habits from 'A to Z,'" clipping, Box 12, Minah Records.

university's service employees might hope to use Duke's size and relative anonymity to forge connections to other workers and even build community security like their counterparts in factories.[122] George Scarborough Jr. admitted that he "had a lot of fun out there talking and chatting with the ladies in the office" and declined a transfer to another department that would have found him more isolated, if better paid.[123] Orderlies were frequently chastised for "cluttering up around the nurses desk," alarming patients who saw this behavior as undisciplined.[124] Moreover, the threatening terminology sometimes used by administrators – "ganging up" - suggests an association of close employee relationships with exclusion, hostility to whites, and independence.[125] While continuing to celebrate the Duke campus as a "family," the constant admonitions against ganging up and chatting among themselves betray a continuous struggle to assert authority over employees and eliminate, or at least manage, the social aspect of work that employees clearly prioritized. Service employees would more explicitly invert the metaphor of "family" in later union organizing, but their relations with certain supervisors and with one another reveal the ways they long sought to manipulate it in their daily interactions.

The long, tortured history of Duke's meal policies reveals both the power and limitations of employees' quiet resistance. Beginning in the 1930s, employees who worked a shift in the hospital or dining halls during a regular meal time were provided with food, a practice that Duke administrators regularly presented as evidence of their generosity and

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[122] See Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham* for black workers' preference for the community of factory work over the isolation of household domestic labor.

[123] Scarborough, *Behind the Veil*.

[124] Malik, "Hospital Opinion Poll," report.

[125] Minah, "Bus Duties," Sept. 10, 1959, Box 23, Minah Records.

magnanimity.[126] However, in boasting that he kept costs well below the standard, Minah admitted in 1947 that dining employees were served "left overs or inexpensive foods" and only "from the kitchen and…under the supervision of the dietitian."[127] These policies quarantined black workers and kept them, quite literally, from enjoying the fruits of their labor. They also resembled the long-resented practice of sending domestic workers home with leftovers and hand-me-downs.[128] Employees themselves recalled frequently going hungry, and sometimes even left Duke to work at Watts Hospital where they "didn't have a cook to ration your food."[129] Black licensed practical nurses (LPNs) once "started a little loud noise" by taking their meals, sitting in the dining room, and refusing to leave.[130] After years of such demonstrations, in 1956 dining hall administrators began allowing employees to take their meals in the cafeteria space and from the regular offerings.[131] Though they were finally free of the limitations that many employees considered offensive, they continued to be criticized for taking too much food or disturbing the quiet of the cafeteria.[132] Students, patients, and white employees still expected black workers to occupy university spaces as servants and not as equals.

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[126] Minah to Henricksen, Aug. 9, 1947, Box 45, Minah Records.

[127] Ibid.

[128] For the complex relationship of private domestic workers to the "service pan," see Sharpless, *Cooking in Other Women's Kitchens*, 74-6; Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom*, 53, 60-61.

[129] Ozzie Richmond, interviewed by Lanier Rand, June 1, 1977, H-0224, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

[130] Clydie Pugh-Myers, interviewed Jan. 18, 2006, Oral History Collection, Duke University Medical Center Archives.

[131] Minah to Steven Harward, memorandum, Apr. 25, 1958, Box 45, Minah Records.

[132] Ibid.

On occasion, service employees took collective action to protest certain conditions of their work, usually by explicitly rejecting the family framework. In 1942, West Campus maids and bus boys each staged noisy and illustrative, if short-lived, demonstrations. The bus boys walked off the job during a February lunchtime rush, leaving their "jobs undone" and forcing the female students to wait in line for their food and clean up the soiled dishes themselves.[133] The manager of the Union at the time was flabbergasted at the walk out, alleging that he had "no indication of discontent" and attributing the strike to a simple misunderstanding wherein "one of their number had not received his pay check exactly on time."[134] The bus boys themselves, on the other hand, cited a "rising tide of dissatisfaction over wages and hours" and voiced numerous other complaints, including excessive breakage fees and docked pay for tardiness.[135] After two days, the labor unrest was "cleared up" amid managerial claims of total vindication.[136] Later that year, in August, the maids grew tired of the space constraints of the separate bus chartered for their transportation between campuses and rejected the University's efforts to "take care of" them.[137] Instead, after "gradually changing their tactics," they began to preemptively take seats on the student bus and "had a lot to say" when pressed to disembark, prompting an embarrassing, tense stand-off.[138]

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[133] "Coeds Eat Cafeteria Style, as Busboys in Union Strike," *The Duke Chronicle*, Feb. 17, 1942.

[134] Ibid.

[135] Ibid.

[136] "Coed Union Walkout is Settled," *The Duke Chronicle*, Feb. 20, 1942.

[137] C.W. Vandiver, Transport Engineer, to Mr. Markham, Aug. 17, 1942, Box 1, Office of the University Treasurer Records, DU Archives.

[138] Ibid.

These protests and their resolutions highlight the tensions that plagued Duke's supposedly idyllic public household. They reveal the ongoing conflict between white expectations for employee behavior and the intentions and interpretations of those employees themselves. The Dining Manager at the time, Jim Thompson, remained confident that the conflict was a simple misunderstanding or, at worst, derived from ignorance on the part of employees to all the benefits they received from employment at Duke. The bus boys had, he acknowledged, been unhappy with their wages and working conditions, but they had "not previously taken into consideration" the other benefits they received like meals and uniforms.[139] Properly informed of the advantages they were offered, they quickly realized their good fortune, he assumed. In the case of the maids, Duke administrators and Durham Public Service Company Engineers commiserated that they had only sought to "take care of the colored maids" and hoped in the future that "these maids would appreciate [the] same and cooperate with us."[140] Administrators and managers insisted on framing these acts of employee unrest as evidence of black ignorance or selfishness, rather than a broader rejection of labor relations or even genuine critiques of specific policies.

Some employees also sought to go through the city's black power brokers to confront the circumstances of their employment. C.C. Spaulding wrote to then-president Flowers in 1946 to inform him that "a number of the Negroes who are employed at Duke University and Duke Hospital are dissatisfied with their wages." Though Spaulding gave no names, he noted that "one individual states he is paid forty-five centers per hour" and warned that this was a "general feeling among the group." Perhaps employees thought that working through a figure

[139] "Coed Union Walkout is Settled."

[140] Vandiver to Markham, Aug. 17, 1942.

like Spaulding would give them their best chance for a favorable hearing, or perhaps they hoped to retain some anonymity with supervisors. Nevertheless, Spaulding's intercession suggests Duke's black employees sought to leverage what resources they had to negotiate the conditions of their labor. Spaulding's tone also suggests the limits of such an approach in an era dominated by more conciliatory political strategies. He ended his letter reassuring Flowers that "I feel that your good institution will do whatever is right by all concerned."[141]

As these incidents make clear, administrators and managers sometimes acknowledged a general sense of dissatisfaction among employees even if they misattributed its causes. Betraying a persistent discomfort with the daily reminders of employee discontent, Duke administrators argued that accepting their status would be a psychological benefit for employees. Embracing the norms and policies administrators promoted would encourage self-improvement by combating disillusion and dissatisfaction. Managers frequently turned to the county health inspectors and State Department of Public Instruction to "motivate our employees" to "*want* to keep the place clean."[142] When all polite entreaties failed, and the employees proved they "cannot or will not cooperate on [their] own," the 'motivation' that supervisors reached for was simply disciplinary.[143] Administrators and managers at once idealized the character of Duke's public household and vigilantly policed its members. That vigilance was necessary only because many service employees never fully acceded to their status as the Duke household's domestic servants.

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[141] C.C. Spaulding to Flowers, July 10, 1946, Box 25, Flowers Records.

[142] Minah, "University Food Service…The Duke Program," *Inplant Magazine* (Mar 1961), clipping, Box 48, Minah Records. Minah to John Barry, Editor, Durham Sun, May 23, 1958, Box 41, Minah Records.

[143] Hugh Starnes, Manager, Men's Dining Halls, to All Employees Who Use This Restroom, Nov. 6, 1962, Box 41, Minah Records.

THREATS FROM OUTSIDE: ADJUSTING TO A CHANGING WORLD

Outside forces also threatened the quiescence of Duke's public household. The postwar period saw a massive expansion in higher education across the nation; at Duke, the sheer magnitude of growth during midcentury and the resulting budgetary constraints posed a significant challenge to its image as a home-like environment. Though wartime Navy programs at Duke were discontinued shortly after World War II, the number of veteran enrollees increased due to the GI Bill.[144] This influx of students heightened the labor needs on campus and sharpened tensions among workers, customers, and administrators. Mirroring nationwide trends, Duke's enrollment grew from 5,350 to 6122 in the first fifteen years after World War II.[145] By 1947, the campus dining halls required one hundred and thirty-five regular, non-student employees to serve its fifteen thousand meals a day.[146] That number would steadily increase as enrollments continued to grow. Likewise, admissions and visits to the hospital climbed every year of the post-war decade, reaching 17,823 patients and 189,000 outpatients in 1954.[147] Administrators and supervisors on both campuses fretted over the rapid growth and strains of reconversion, complaining that they were often required to "take inexperienced" help.[148] Yet, senior Duke administrators and individual academic and auxiliary departments also sought the financial capital that made growth, and thus such new

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[144] This was true at institutions across the nation. See Glenn C. Altschuler and Stuart M. Blumin, *The GI Bill: A New Deal for Veterans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[145] *Hill's Durham (Durham County, NC) City Directory* (Richmond: Hill Directory Co., 1946, 1961). For nationwide growth during the postwar period, largely as a result of government support, see Christopher Lucas, *American Higher Education: A History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 232-4.

[146] "Statement of Operations, Dining Halls, Duke Universities," c. 1947, Box 16, Minah Records.

[147] "Duke Census Hits New Peak," *Intercom* 1, No. 8, June 1955, 1. This, too, was true in hospitals across the country.

[148] Mickey, Superintendent, to Charles Jordan, Oct. 27, 1945, Box 1, Charles Jordan Papers, DU Archives.

employees, necessary. By the 1960's, both Duke University and Hospital employed more than one thousand service workers each.[149] But even as conditions required that administrators and managers adopt modern business practices, they maintained the racialized framework that long mediated Duke's reproductive labors.

Ted Minah perhaps best personifies how the service work model at Duke adapted to the changing exigencies and requirements of postwar life, updating and modernizing but never wholly forsaking the styles of southern paternalism. Hired after students pleaded for administrators to "discover a top-notch eating expert who knows more than a little bit about restaurant management," Minah represented a new breed of dining hall manager come to the South.[150] Whereas the former manager of the union was a Duke alumnus who took over the management of the dining halls when he graduated, Minah was professionally credentialed with experience in Navy kitchens and schooled in industrial-style food management. In keeping with the older "collegiate-ideal," he had a capacious view of the role of the dining facilities in student life. Yet, re-envisioning those ideals in light of Cold War realities, Minah and his other professional colleagues in university food management argued that they were "doing our part to keep America up there where it belongs in the world race."[151] For his efforts, Minah won the Duke Dining Halls numerous honors from trade and industry groups.[152] Minah's arrival seemed to promise a brand-new approach to dining services, but

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[149] "Employment Growth, Duke University," report, Dec. 1967-Dec. 1966, Box 7, VP Records.

[150] "Out of the Masthead," *The Duke Chronicle*, Nov. 30, 1945.

[151] Minah to Mr. Thomas D. Endicott, Editor, Hospital and School Feeding, Nov. 7, 1962, Box 49, Minah Records.

[152] James McClellan, Food Service Contest Editor, Institutions Magazine, to Minah, June 25, 1951, Box 46, Minah Records; Minah to Mr. Jack Quaritius, Executive Vice President, Peninsular Life Insurance Company, Mar. 24, 1961, Box 48, Minah Records.

he, too, would prove invested in maintaining the racial and gender relations already established in Duke's 'public household.'

This tension permeated the Minah's approach to summer layoffs of dining hall employees. Finals week may have meant all-nighters and final reckonings for students, but for some employees it portended another involuntary lay off and a scramble to replace already meager wages. Shortly after his arrival, Minah instituted a summer placement program that purported to answer the financial constraints of postwar management, but which also reinscribed fantasies of white control and black obedience. For the most part, the university denied "any responsibility for obtaining jobs" for these employees over the summer.[153] Regular lay-offs did, however, pose a challenge to Duke's service operations if the workforce had to be completely reconstituted each August. Minah thus began to contract with facilities across the state and as far away as upstate New York to send some workers, primarily cooks and bakers, to tourist sites in need of summer help.[154] The flexible and surplus labor of these workers helped subsidize the maintenance of the booming summer resort industry, while allowing Duke to maintain a core body of available labor.[155]

Minah's system helped ensure a summer pay packet for some of the university's employees, but it also carried echoes of antebellum hiring-out systems, not least because

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[153] John Strange and Scott Stevens, "Maids Sweep in Weekly Pay of $19.50," *The Duke Chronicle*, Mar. 6, 1959.

[154] J. Parks O'Connor, Assistant Manager, Otesaga Hotel, to Minah, Apr. 14, 1964, Box 41, Minah Records.

[155] For the increasing popularity of summer vacations, Susan Sessions Rugh, *Are We There Yet?: The Golden Age of American Family Vacations* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008). Rugh describes resorts as being run by "family labor," a situation undoubtedly true in many smaller places. However, she also notes that one resort seated 1600 at meal times, which suggests to me that they were also employing cooking staff. That many resorts were family run certainly coincides with the personal nature of Minah's correspondence with their owners. Theodore Corbett's book on Upstate New York suggests that most workers at these resorts were local until the 20th century. Corbett, *The Making of American Resorts: Saratoga Springs, Ballston Spa, and Lake George* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001).

these employees still seemed to belong to Duke and its supervisors. The tenor of paternalism permeated the voluminous correspondence between Minah and resort managers. When officials took out advertisements in the bulletins of the North Carolina Hotel Association and the North Carolina Restaurant Association promoting the "colored employees available for work" over the summer, they warned that "Mr. Minah wants them back in the fall."[156] Minah encouraged Mrs. Margie Suthard of Jockey Ridge Inn to come to Duke and "pick them out yourselves. If you do not like them you can send them home at any time, and we can replace them with others, if you wish."[157] He assured a repeat partner that "you shall get first choice" among available employees and promised another that next year he would "be very glad to save a cook or two for you."[158] Furthermore, when a 1956 construction project prevented hospital employees from using their own cafeterias, the campus food service workers were called on to fill that need and Minah decided to only "allow" those who had regular summer jobs arranged through him to leave Durham in the usual season.[159] Otherwise burdened with arranging alternative work for themselves during the summer, these employees were now required to stay on unless they had Minah's express consent.

Minah also continued to signal his right to spy and supervise even when his employees left Durham. With very rare exception, discussions about the schedule and payment for their summer work bypassed the black men and women performing it entirely,

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[156] Service Bulletin, North Carolina Hotel Association, Feb. 1, 1950, Box 48, Minah Records.

[157] Minah to Mrs. Margie Suthard, Apr. 6, 1951, Box 48, Minah Records.

[158] Minah to Mr. and Mrs. H.L. Hayman, Aug. 30, 1951, and Minah to Mrs. B.H. Griggs, July 23, 1951, Box 48, Minah Records.

[159] Minah to Bevier, Feb. 23, 1956, Box 41, Minah Records.

with Minah settling arrival and departure dates and offering "guidance as to salary."[160] Minah frequently requested reports on the behavior and attitudes of "our boys."[161] Employees who had not "kept their promises" or any who "lets his employer down" would not be rehired at Duke.[162] Notice that one employee was "getting temperamental" with his summer employer seemed to portend some manner of retribution.[163] Minah's own response, that he was getting "sick and tired of Henry's crankiness," implies that Henry may indeed have begun to chafe under the conditions of his work.[164] Henry's purported request on "three different occasions" that the employer "write to him rather than working through" Minah suggests an effort to rid himself of Minah's oversight.[165] He may even have carried his dissatisfaction with Duke into his off-campus work, seeing it as an extension of the social relations that made him cranky at home. Minah's concerns were thus confirmed by his colleague, and together they penalized Henry for failing to project the desired attitude of service. Minah and these resort owners shared a sense of transferrable authority that reveals the ways that the white "imagination of control and wisdom" permeated the knowledge economy and facilitated a market in low-wage, precarious black service labor.[166]

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[160] Ralph Bevier to Minah, Mar. 3, 1959, Box 41, Minah Records.

[161] Minah to Bevier, Aug. 15, 1950, Box 41, Minah Records.

[162] Minah to Mr. and Mrs. H.L. Hayman, Aug. 30, 1951; Theodore Minah, "University Food Service…The Duke Program," *Inplant Magazine*, Mar. 1961, clipping, Box 48, Minah Records.

[163] Bevier to Minah, Jan. 21, 1959, Box 41, Minah Records.

[164] Minah to Bevier, Feb. 26, 1959, Box 41, Minah Records.

[165] Bevier to Minah, Feb. 13, 1959, Box 41, Minah Records.

[166] I borrow this phrase from David R. Roediger and Elizabeth D. Esch, in their study of racial fantasies and categorization in management. Roediger and Esch, *The Production of Difference: Race and the Management of Labor in U.S. History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 8.

Minah and other dining managers also faced the considerable challenge of navigating between the demands for variety and economy in the postwar college environment. One of Minah's first large-scale changes to the dining system in the early post-war period was the introduction of what was termed the 'cafeteria-style' to replace the 'family-style' of dining. Though he hailed the range of choice that this policy would provide students, Minah also confided in colleagues at other universities that "cafeteria service is about the only way I know of beating this tremendous [labor] problem."[167] Duke opened a grill service for "hurried students" in 1949 and expanded it further a few years later.[168] A formal dining hall that opened in 1947, the Oak Room, on the other hand, was "operated like a gentleman's club" with table service and professional waitresses to ensure a feeling of "luxury."[169] Together, the cafeteria-style dining, formal dining room, and short-order grill were designed to save the "more and more valuable" time of the student, but they also significantly transformed the geographic and social experience of working in Duke's dining halls.[170] Most importantly, dining employees were spread more broadly across the university's campuses, they worked in smaller units, and their jobs grew increasingly differentiated.

If the style and variety of food service were susceptible to student preferences, other changes were aimed more explicitly at a 'modernization' of what Minah had come to see as the chief challenge to maintaining high standards and low prices: labor. A management firm called in to evaluate the dining facilities organization in 1947 announced that the introduction

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[167] Minah to Mr. W.M. Norfleet Jr., Union Theological Seminary, Apr. 26, 1948, Box 41, Minah Records.

[168] "Hurried Students Now Offered Grill Service," *Chronicle*, Sept. 30, 1949. This obsession with convenience was widespread in American food culture during the postwar period. Harvey Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty: The Social History of Eating in Modern America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 101-118.

[169] "University Food Service…The Duke Program," *Inplant Magazine* (Mar. 1961), Box 48, Minah Records.

[170] Minah, "Duke Remodels for Expansion," *Inplant Magazine* (Feb. 1968), Box 38, Minah Records.

of technologies like cash registers would "greatly add to the internal control" efforts of the facility.[171] Through the 1950s, Minah embraced new dishwashing technologies, including a conveyor that allowed students to dispose of their own trays, "so as to save the labor of bus boys" as well as "a great many man hours of labor" in the dishwashing crew.[172] Conveyor belts also turned some of the kitchens into culinary assembly lines, with service personnel stationed in front of one food and tasked with spooning the same portion on each passing tray.

Federal funding for dormitory expansion provided the opportunity to install "ultra-modern" dining facilities, hailed as such largely for their impact on workers: that no employee was required to (or allowed to) take more than fourteen steps and in which an intercom system kept "employees constantly in touch with food supervisors," monitoring their work.[173] Some of these technologies allowed dining hall supervisors to downsize or transform the work force, while others facilitated broader attempts to regularize and thus control the flow and performance of employee's work. Taken together with Minah's summer supervision-by-proxy, they contributed to a panopticon-like feeling of continuous

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[171] Elkins, Durham & Kemp, report, 1947, Box 10, Minah Records. Here we see another example of the university reaching out towards external, 'business' firms for advice on labor organization. For a discussion of this industry, see Christopher McKenna, *The World's Newest Profession: Management Consulting in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006). See chapter three for a more extensive example at Duke.

[172] Minah to Norfleet, Apr. 26, 1948, Box 41, Minah Records. For the use of such labor practices and technologies in the food industry more broadly, see Katie Rawson, and Elliot Shore, *Dining Out: A Global History of Restaurants* (Reaktion Books, 2019), 161-186. Rawson and Shore claim that conveyor belts were being used in mass food preparation by the mid twentieth century, 179. Harvey Levenstein also emphasizes the use of conveyor belts and an obsession with lowering labor costs. Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty,* 129-130. For a discussion of McDonald's labor practices and critics of the focus on assembly line production and unskilled labor, see John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle, *Fast Food: Roadside Restaurants in the Automobile Age* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 158-160.

[173] "Narrative Description," Gilbert-Addoms Contest Entry, Box 13, Minah Records.

supervision. For employees that remained, these same changes led to feelings of alienation and bodily restraint akin to those expressed by industrial workers of an earlier era.[174]

Though he could only anticipate the use of "time and motion studies [which] are already done in many industries," Minah long exhibited an interest in the use of other social technologies to control the costs of labor.[175] The dining halls commissioned the 'idle time division' of the University in 1948 to initiate a "detailed study of traffic flows," a measure used frequently to monitor and discipline service-cashier teams.[176] Together with some minor adjustments to the heights of counters, he credited this traffic flow project with solving a "terrific labor problem" by allowing them to downsize the staff by forty-three percent in the first two years after his arrival.[177] Perhaps disingenuously, he also argued that these changes made it a "much pleasanter place for employees to work."[178] Whether or not employees truly enjoyed this early attempt at scientific management, it established Minah as a credible and fiscally responsible leader in the eyes of Duke's administration. While certainly not the only manager to make use of business-tested labor control methods, Minah gained considerable acclaim within the higher education community, such that he was frequently recommended as a consultant to other colleges. Implemented only intermittently, such tactics nevertheless reveal a burgeoning interest in scrutinizing and controlling labor through top-down technological and social systems.

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[174] See, for instance, the protests by Southern mill workers, Jacqueline Dowd Hall et al., *Like A Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2000), 296.

[175] Minah, "University Food Service…The Duke Program."

[176] Ibid.

[177] Minah to Mr. Joseph Janson, Associate Editor, *Institutions Magazine*, Sept. 26, 1952, Box 13, Minah Records.

[178] Minah, "University Food Service…The Duke Program."

In devising these new systems of time management and labor control, Minah and other supervisors drew in part from business practices standard to both industrial and service sectors. As early as 1948, the University's auditors called for more formal procedures and "principles of organization."[179] In the 1950s, job descriptions across the University grew increasingly formal and detailed.[180] Following these impulses, organizations like the National Association of College and University Business Officers and the National Association of College Food Service (NACFS) tried to devise "norms against which [members could] check their operations," and advocated the adoption of "several effective means of control."[181] The hospital's executive housekeeper likewise always returned from the annual American Hospital Association meeting with "a bag full of new ideas on sanitation" management.[182] Even before what some scholars have called the "professional turn," supervisors in auxiliary services at Duke, as elsewhere, were conscientiously, if intermittently, adopting the trappings of industrial management.[183]

Still, alongside these efforts at formalization, Minah and other Duke administrators continued to reference the "home-like" and "family" atmosphere, betraying the persistently

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[179] "Duke University, Business Administration Division," report, Feb. 5, 1948, Box 23, Minah Records.

[180] See, for example, "Dish Room Operators," n.d., proposed schedule, Box 41, Minah Records.

[181] See, for instance, Minah to Mrs. James Hutcheson, Feb. 18, 1955, Box 44, Minah Records; "Union Cafeteria Staff Serves About 15,000 Meals Per Day," Duke Alumni Register, Jan. 1947, clipping, Box 48, Minah Records; "This 'n' That," Intercom, June 1955 and Apr. 1956.

[182] Martha Scoggins, "Six Employees Join Housekeeping Department," *Intercom*, Apr. 1954.

[183] Historians usually date the first bureaucratic revolution to the late 19th and early 20th century, but even those scholars have tended to distinguish the early period from a late 20th century with an increasing focus on business methods. Outside of history, scholarly observers have treated the late 20th century with special alarm. See Randy Martin, *Under New Management: Universities, Administrative Labor, and the Professional Turn* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011); and Henry Heller, *The Capitalist University: The Transformations of Higher Education in the United States, 1945-2016* (London: Pluto Press, 2016).

familiar tone of the university's supervisory mechanisms.[184] For instance, the same list of suggestions that promoted the use of time studies advocated that supervisors "take a personal interest in each person and their families and problems."[185] Whether described as "personal coaching," the "meeting of personal problems," a responsibility to "advise employees concerning financial, personal, and family matters," or necessity to "keep informed of employee's personal feelings," supervisors interacted with employees and exercised their authority in deeply familiar terms.[186] Minah often involved himself in employees' private affairs, interjecting himself into exchanges with the housing authority, school district, and debt collectors.[187] Some supervisors pledged to "look after" certain employees facing medical emergencies exacerbated by a lack of insurance and legal protections.[188]

Mandatory retirement policies instituted in the 1950s illustrated the fundamental tensions being reproduced in a university system intent on 'modernizing' the management of employees while still holding on to personalistic and relational work regimes. Though the university adopted a mandatory retirement age for non-academic employees in the early 1950s, it offered no ongoing support for the employee after retirement. The university's retirement program was limited to faculty and administrators. Moreover, the university had worked alongside other nonprofits to prevent their employees from coming under Social

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[184] Minah to Mrs. James Hutcheson, Feb. 18, 1955, Box 44, Minah Records; "Supt's Corner," *Intercom*, June 1958, 2.

[185] "Suggestions to Managers," Box 46, Minah Records.

[186] "Duke University, Business Administration Division," report, Feb. 5, 1948; "Job Description," n.d., Box 8, Minah Records; "Housekeeper and Personnel Manager," description, Mar. 22, 1963, Box 23, Minah Records.

[187] Minah to Catherine Graves, Jan. 1961, Box 44, Minah Records; Minah to Ernest Haywood, Nov. 29, 1949, Box 45, Minah Records; Minah to McPherson Hospital, Sept. 22, 1950, Box 48, Minah Records.

[188] Minah to E.W. Poole, Jan. 11, 1957, Box 48, Minah Records. See Chapter 1.

Security legislation until the 1950s, preventing nonacademic workers from accruing much credit in the system.[189]

For many employees, the sudden announcement that they could no longer be employed at Duke came as a shock, depriving them of vital income. At times, supervisors lobbied to keep favorite employees on, but with only mixed results.[190] When some supervisors or faculty expressed concerns about the long-term wellbeing of employees they knew well, the administration assured them that the terminated employee's "friends" had worked together to give him a parting gift, but reaffirmed that the university would do no more.[191] Where the university's formal responsibilities ended and state-managed old-age security failed, president J. Deryl Hart fell back on appeals to informal and voluntary networks of social responsibility.[192] One historian dated this combination of "new-style industrial efficiency and […] old-style paternalistic racism" to the 1960s and 1970s, but its roots at Duke clearly lie in the postwar period.[193] Efforts to put the university's auxiliary services on a business footing meant, in large part, limiting the institution's responsibility to its employees. Meanwhile, relations of personal exchange and (often unfulfilled) paternalism continued to structure most employees' daily work life.

Even as some administrators envisioned a fully automated and impersonal factory-like efficiency, they enforced more rigorous and demanding constraints on bodily and

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[189] See chapter 1.

[190] Minah to Walter Cooper, Personnel Director, Feb. 25, 1955, Box 48, Minah Records; Minah to Cooper, June 7, 1961, Box 46, Minah Records.

[191] Hart to Professor Edgar Thompson, Aug. 8, 1960, Box 10, J. Deryl Hart Records, DU Archives.

[192] Hart was a long-time head of surgery at the university and was caretaker president from 1960-1963.

[193] Sacks, *Caring By the Hour,* 3.

emotional autonomy. Beyond being expected to be "happy and cheerful" as opposed to "cold and stiff," employees faced both social pressure to "go beyond the call of duty" as well as formal job descriptions that required they "do extra work without having to be told."[194] Like dining hall administrators across the nation, Duke supervisors sought staff that "genuinely like people…pleasing them," though one must wonder how supervisors hoped to measure genuineness, or, similarly, an employee's internal "sense of pride" in their work.[195] Together with ongoing praise for "an attitude of loyalty" to the organization, these entreaties reveal a preoccupation that employees internalize and project emotional states in keeping with a tone of personalized service.[196] The racialized nature of Duke's labor hierarchy combined with this panoptic regime of internalized supervision created a management system imbued with layers of power, privilege, and coercion.[197]

University administrators exercised particular concern about the physical appearance and "personal cleanliness" of female employees. This was partially because women were more often assigned jobs in a direct service capacity in the dining and housekeeping functions. But, the fixation on female employees' appearances stretched beyond

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[194] Minah to Herbert Kutz, Director of Dining Halls, Yale University, Apr. 30, 1963, Box 46, Minah Records; Porter, "Need for Trained Negro Practical Nurses;" Pugh-Myers interview; "Job Description: Janitor," n.d., Box 33, Minah Records.

[195] "Careers in Quantity Food Service," pamphlet, Box 6, Minah Records; Minah to Mildred Kaufman, June 26, 1969, Box 49, Minah Records.

[196] Minah to Parnell, May 10, 1957, Box 46, Minah Records. The daily struggle over proper behavior mirrors that which Susan Porter Benson found among shop clerks at the turn of the century. Benson, *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890-1940* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986).

[197] I use the metaphor of the panopticon to denote a state of constant surveillance and the attempt to guide employees to self-discipline. See Alan McKinlay and Ken Starkey, eds., *Foucault, Management and Organizational Theory: From Panoptic on to Technologies of Self* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998).

contemporary sanitation requirements. They needed to be "aesthetically clean as well as hygienically" so, which reveals particular gendered notions underlying service.[198] Job descriptions and recruitment materials for many who worked beyond the view of student-customers, stipulated that these women take a "personal interest in being neat and clean at all times," have "pride in their appearance," and be "conservative in use of cosmetics."[199] Materials from the State Board of Health included a "chart of personal appearance points for women" and other highly gendered instructions focused on "lipstick and rouge" application and an attractive "smile."[200] Though these employees were rarely congratulated on their 'good looks' like student employees, the university relied on the appearance of the black service staff at Duke to create an aura of middle-class respectability. Administrators' distrust of these workers' ability or desire to perform that function required gendered mechanisms of control and policing.[201]

At the hospital, administrators and patients came to associate a calm and sterile environment with modern "top-notch" medical care, which they set in direct contradiction to the social atmosphere favored by black service workers.[202] They reacted especially sharply to complaints that workers called "from one end of the hall to the other about personal matters."[203] Reminding employees that "courteous words spoken in a low pleasing voice, are

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[198] "Assistant Manager – Graduate Center Dining Halls," job description, c. 1955, Box 11, Minah Records.

[199] "Supervisor's Manual," Nov. 12, 1962, Box 1, Human Resources Collection; "A Guide for High School Graduate Seeking Information on Job Opportunities," c. 1956, Box 6, Minah Records; "Chart of Personal Appearance Pointers for Women," Box 12, Minah Records.

[200] "Chart of Personal Appearance Pointers for Women," n.d.; and "Bad, Bad Habits from 'A to Z;'" n.d., Box 12, Minah Records.

[201] See Barry, *Femininity in Flight*, for similar efforts directed towards airline attendants.

[202] "Duke Still Offers Top Notch Medical Care at Minimum Cost," *Intercom* (Aug. 1954).

[203] "Annual Report, 1959-1960," Box 2, Hospital Auxiliary Records, Duke University Medical Center Archives.

pleasant to hear and easy to say, and they show that you are a pleasant person to be around," supervisors even tried to control speech, targeting the "shrill" voices they thought disrupted the "gracious atmosphere" befitting an institution of Duke's caliber.[204] A cartoon in the hospital employee newsletter portrayed the efforts of several white female nurses – "There's a time and place for everything!" - to stem the rowdy, playful behavior of three black male orderlies, suggesting that ongoing conflicts over restrained behavior sometimes mapped themselves conveniently onto other social stereotypes.[205] Using social discipline and restraint, hospital leaders hoped to obscure the humanity of the people performing the reproductive labor and reposition them as tools of modern medicine.

Even when downplaying these workers' humanity, supervisors emphasized on "tight," personal, and even intimate control that drew from the traditions embodied by the idealized public household.[206] Control was sometimes exercised by proxies like students, patients, and fellow employees, imbuing the work culture even further with a sense of surveillance. Hospital porters had to check in with the office secretary "when you leave the area, and again when you return."[207] Supervisors in campus and hospital dining were required to "inspect [each] tray for accuracy," monitor the attitude of employees, and mindfully watch for any breakage in order to charge the offending employee.[208] Even the physical layout of the dining facilities expressly facilitated close monitoring of employee

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[204] "Job Description, Errand Porter to Dean's Office," n.d. Box 26, Davison Records; Martha Scoggins, "Six Employees Join Housekeeping Dept," *Intercom* (Apr. 1954).

[205] *Intercom* (Feb. 1955).

[206] Minah to Dean Robert Cox, Feb. 17, 1949, Box 41, Minah Records; See Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage*; Sharpless, *Cooking in Other Women's Kitchens*, 129-171.

[207] "Job Description, Errand Porter to Dean's Office."

[208] "Hot Foods Hot, Cold Foods Cold," *Intercom* (Nov. 1957).

movements. A newly built facility in 1952 included the strategic location of restrooms to require passing in front of the supervisor's office, "insuring a constant check on the whereabouts of each employee."[209] Administrators lauded the new intercom system installed in that same year for its ability to allow supervisors to remain "constantly in touch" with employees.[210] Maids, practical nurses, and dining employees reported being followed into the restroom to ensure that they did not dally on work time.[211] Deploying technological and social advances meant to modernize supervisory strategies, Duke administrators sought to extract a greater degree of personal and intimate authority over the racialized workforce whose labor continued to define it as a 'public household.'

This mixed system – reliance on deeply personal mechanisms of control to implement and fill in the gaps of formal policies and methods for scientific management - was not unique to Duke as a university or as an employer. Historians have found this same amalgam of purportedly modern and supposedly pre-modern personnel policies in other industries as well as other service companies.[212] As Jacqueline Dowd Hall and her co-authors argued in relation to an earlier period of New South industrialization, trying to parse out the relative triumph of "capitalist social relations," "paternalism," and "negotiated loyalty" is to misunderstand the ways they were often mutually constitutive of each other.[213] Rather than aberrations in an otherwise clear development from "pre-modern" to "modern" personnel

[209] "Description of General Layout," *Institutions* Contest Entry, 1952-3, Box 13, Minah Records.

[210] "Narrative Description," *Institutions* Contest Entry, 1952-3, Box 13, Minah Records.

[211] Clydie Pugh-Myers interview.

[212] See Dowd Hall, et al., *Like a Family*; and Sanford Jacoby, M*odern Manors: Welfare Capitalism Since the New Deal* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998) for just two examples.

[213] Dowd Hall, *Like a Family*, 371.

policies, ideas of racialized service, personal loyalty, and emotional devotion remained central to the way many administrators, managers, students, and patients viewed the university community and often propelled experimentation in management.

Efforts to reform the hiring and training practices for service workers likewise re-inscribed and reproduced the racial hierarchies of old Duke and Durham. Securing more formal pipelines for employee hiring became especially important as postwar conditions provided marginally better employment opportunities for black workers and employees nationwide increasingly demanded a forty-hour work week. Changing student and patient expectations sometimes required the university to hire more, and differently credentialed, employees. However, the formal recruiting strategies adopted by Duke supervisors often intensified the racial-typing of jobs rather than promoting new ways of thinking about service work and service workers. By the middle of the 1950s, supervisors in dining, grounds keeping, and housekeeping began to build relationships with local black middle and high schools, and in particular with the 'vocational' programs those schools hosted.[214] School systems across the nation operated similar 'vocational' programs that funneled black young people into low-paying and historically racialized jobs.[215]

As African American communities increasingly advocated for greater educational opportunities and raised their expectations, many school systems simply adapted these older patterns of racial tracking by adding more formal trappings. Duke supervisors supported the development of "Career Guidance" programs like the "Diversified Occupations Club," the

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[214] For examples, see Minah to Kiwanis Vocational Guidance Program, May 16, 1962, Box 6, Minah Records; "Vocational Education Committee," Durham city Schools, report, Mar. 1964, Box 45, Minah Records; "Invitation to Distributive Education Club of Hillside High School's Annual Bosses' Banquet," 1962, Box 6, Minah Records.

[215] See Lisa Levenstein, *A Movement Without Marches: African American Women and the Politics of Poverty in Postwar Philadelphia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

"Food Education and Service Training Program," and the District's "Distributive Education Department" within black Durham schools.[216] From these programs, supervisors recruited young black students as early as the eighth grade to gain "education" experience by working "in a business establishment or industry in the afternoon."[217] At Duke, that meant that black teenage men and women were hired as bussers, lawn care workers, and pantry workers. They filled out the ranks of the low-wage, flexible, part-time workforce that was increasingly necessary to meet employees' demands for an eight-hour workday and students' preferences for a greater variety of service options.

Students and patients, like most Americans, also grew increasingly familiar with commercial restaurant culture, and began to demand that Duke's food service match the quality and variety of foods offered by "any downtown establishment."[218] When Minah arrived on campus shortly after the student food protest of 1945, he resisted firing the cook, who had been criticized for coming from "of all places, the cotton mills!"[219] Minah did, however, seek to bolster the credentials of the kitchen by drawing from one of the most infamously racialized segments of the Armed forces, asking his former colleagues for contact

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[216] "List of Career Guidance Appointments Made by Jane Chestnut," n.d., Box 6, Minah Records; J.M. Deeds, Co-Advisor, Diversified Occupations Program to Edens, 1954, Box 12, Edens Collection; newspaper clipping about Gary Kay, Box 8, Minah Records; Minah to Mrs. Betty Merritt, Guidance Counselor, Merrick-Moore School, Mar. 22, 1962, Box 6, Minah Records.

[217] J.M. Deeds to Edens, 1954, Box 12, Edens Collection.

[218] "Letters to the Chronicle," *The Duke Chronicle*, Nov. 14, 1947. For growth in casual restaurant food culture, see Jakle and Sculle, *Fast Food*. Figures for the amount of money American's spent eating out in the postwar era are on page 22. For the particular focus on family or group dining, and how it transformed the mostly masculine working-class space of the American diner, see Andrew Hurley, "From Hash House to Family Restaurant: The Transformation of the Diner and Post-World War II Consumer Culture," *Journal of American History* 83, no. 4 (Mar. 1997): 1282-1308. Durham's food scene was more robust in the 1950s than it had ever been before. See advertisements in *Hill's Durham (Durham County, NC) City Directory* (Richmond: Hill Directory Co., 1950-1959).

[219] Reb Barker, "Union Direction, Coffee Shop Still Under Heavy Barrage," *The Duke Chronicle*, Dec. 15, 1945.

information for the "top-notch men we had overseas" in the Navy messes.[220] When his efforts to locate or entice Navy cooks failed, Minah received funding to launch a series of trainings for veterans in cooking, baking, and cafeteria management, which he opened only to black applicants.[221]

Though Southern black women were often asked to "cook in other women's kitchens" in their roles as domestic workers, large-scale food preparation across the nation fell mostly to black men who were considered strong and sturdy enough to work in the cramped, hot, and frequently unsafe industrial kitchens.[222] Minah's experience with the racial job typing of the U.S. Navy validated the university's longstanding use of black men as mess cooks, and his arrival and 'modern' innovations corresponded with an intensification rather than dislodging of the association of black masculinity with food preparation. On the one hand, the increased focus on formal training through the dining halls set these men more formally apart from the masses of interchangeable service workers, reflected in heftier wage packets.[223] At the same time, Minah lamented wrongly for decades that he and his white food service supervisor had been forced to take "bran [sic] new people (Negro)," all of which "had

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[220] Minah to Mr. Howard Redcay, Feb. 18, 1946, Box 49, Minah Records. For history of racist treatment of black Navy veterans, and their relegation to the kitchens, see Bernard C. Nalty, *Long Passage to Korea: Black Sailors and the Integration of the U.S. Navy* (Washington D.C.: Naval Historical Center, 2003) and Richard Miller, *The Messman Chronicles: African Americans in the U.S. Navy, 1932-1943* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2004).

[221] A.L. Olmstead, Executive Secretary, Veterans Education, to Minah, Jan. 13, 1947, Box 51, Minah Records. For one black veteran working as a janitor at Duke, this program presented an unprecedented, though ultimately unattainable, opportunity to parley national service into higher paid and more prestigious work. Minah to Bob Cushman, Dec. 6, 1949, Box 41, Minah Records.

[222] See Sharpless, *Cooking in Other Women's Kitchens*. For black men in industrial kitchens, see features in *Institutions Magazine* and *Inplant Magazine*.

[223] Elizabeth Kaiser, Men's Graduate Center Dining Halls to Mr. W.G. Cooper, Personnel Office, Sept. 28, 1955, Box 11, Minah Records.

actually come right out of the fields," and make something more of them.[224] The position of cooks as the aristocracy of the service workforce was thus deeply attenuated, defined by higher wages but racialized masculinity.

In the hospital, a postwar training program for practical nurses aimed at resolving the competing demands of quality and affordable care specifically recruited black women to fill positions deemed well suited for *their* particular racialized 'abilities.' For Duke Hospital administrators, the 'hospital aide,' a catch-all job category that had long dominated hospital work, no longer seemed a tenable long-term solution to patient care due to "competition with industry, low caliber of applicants, and turnover within the group" as well as a growing pressure to reassign labors away from registered nurses.[225] Duke Hospital's Superintendent Ross Porter was a champion of a newly created position called a practical nurse, or LPN, which he argued could simultaneously fulfill burgeoning personnel needs and combat the "high cost of hospitalization."[226] Thus, practical nurses at Duke came to occupy a liminal position between trained personnel and caring labor; they might be asked to perform up to seventy percent of the duties of a nurse but much of their job still consisted of washing patient's bodies, rubbing their backs, and cleaning the facilities.[227]

While most of the other North Carolina LPN schools focused on training local poor white women as nurses, Duke's administrators boasted of their own program's success, "established for the exclusive training of Negroes."[228] Practical nurses, the superintendent

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[224] Minah to Mr. J. Crockett Parnell, May 10, 1957, Box 46, Minah Records.

[225] Porter, "Need for Trained Negro Practical Nurses."

[226] Ibid.

[227] Ibid.

[228] Ibid.

reasoned, were essential to the democratization of modern medical care in large numbers. He noted several times that given "competition for their services from other sources is not as keen," hospital administrators would find "more Negro than White girls available for practical nurse training" due to the "generally lower economic status they occupy."[229] Because opportunities for jobs as secretaries and teachers were rarely available to black women, practical nursing would be a comparatively prized occupation. Superintendent Porter and others saw black women as an untapped, willing, overqualified, and thus readily exploitable source of labor power.

Though Superintendent Porter touted the focus on black women as being mutually satisfactory – benefiting "nursing needs, the individual Negro girl and the society in which she lives" – he embedded racialized thinking into the institutional vision of the positioning and performance of the job.[230] Black women, he argued, were perfectly suited for this new and vital job because of their "natural ability to render a personalized type" of care and their well-earned reputation as being "adept in rendering personal service."[231] Further, he hoped that their presence would be quickly accepted by patients who had grown used to "the use of Negro personnel in patient care," implicitly equating practical nurses with the more traditional sight of black maids and janitors.[232] As Porter deployed the imagery of personal service, he ensured the continued association of black women's labors with 'maid'-like service, revealing the profound, enduring, and perniciously adaptable character of racial

[229] Ibid.

[230] Ibid.

[231] Ibid.

[232] Ibid.

thinking in Duke's auxiliary services even in the face of modern institutional demands. Duke would adopt a modern system of credentialed and professional licensed professional nursing, but they would insist on "clinging to mammy" as they did it.[233]

CONCLUSION

Duke University grew tremendously between 1930 and 1960. Accompanying that growth was a rise in the number of students and patients who came to expect the institution to provide food, housing, and even care. From the first, Duke administrators developed a system for providing those services which relied on the labor of black employees and a racialized vision of their place within the university community. They cast the university as a "public household" with a "home-like" and caring atmosphere. White male managers like Ted Minah oversaw the household, acting in turn as father figure to students and disciplinarian to employees. The white women who largely made up the supervisory ranks of this workforce came from a mix of backgrounds but occupied in this hierarchy a maternal role characterized by an idealized vision of gendered whiteness. The black workers who performed most of the campus' daily reproductive labors were subject to demands for servility, threats of punishment and violence, and the deeply limited economic conditions that coerced participation in such a system.

But the idealized public household was never so quiescent. In small but never insignificant ways, the university's service workers continually resisted the imposition of these racialized narratives and hierarchies. The university's mushrooming staffing demands eventually compounded the challenges posed by employee's resistance, prompting administrators and managers to reach for new approaches to control and manage their service

[233] Micki McElya, *Clinging to Mammy: The Faithful Slave in Twentieth-Century America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

employees. Yet, even as they did so, administrators held stubbornly to the tropes and scripts of the racialized "public household," betraying the continued importance of these narratives to the university's social legitimacy. It would take a far more large-scale revolt from service workers in the 1960 and 70s to finally – and then only partially - dislodge some of the more entrenched systems of racial thinking at Duke.

CHAPTER 3: "A LADY IN EVERY RESPECT": GENDER, WHITENESS, AND CLERICAL LABOR AT DUKE, 1930-1960[1]

On February 1, 1956 Duke Hospital lost "one of its favorite people." After twenty-five years of "loyal and devoted service" across numerous clerical posts, Reba Hobgood, also known as Mrs. Burke, was retiring. According to the employee newsletter, Hobgood's "kind and understanding" demeanor had made the hospital "a place of respect and affection" for the "literally thousands of people" she had met there. Because she represented all that was good and caring, her name had "become synonymous with the best that is Duke."[2]

That month, the hospital's superintendent used his regular column to cast Hobgood's departure as a symptom of the hospital's larger challenges. Despite the hospital's "tremendously rapid growth," Hobgood never allowed a "sense of impersonality or institutionalism" to infect her work. But Superintendent Porter's elegiac tone carried a warning to others as much as a celebration of Hobgood. Her retirement represented "the passing from the scene of activity of an increasing number of our first generation," and was a "forceful reminder" of the "painful experience of entering into [the hospital's] second generation."[3] Administrators worried that perhaps "an inevitable result of the rapid expansion of facilities" was the "loss of a feeling of closeness," of the "friendliness and willingness to

[1] "Miss Nola Dalton," recommendation by W.E. Carrett, President, Hoke Lumber Company, Inc., Apr. 17, 1930, Box 1, Office of the University Treasurer Records, Duke University Archives [Hereafter DU Archives].

[2] "Mrs. Hobgood Retires Feb.1," *Intercom,* Feb. 1, 1956, 1.

[3] F. Ross Porter, "Supt's Corner," *Intercom,* Feb. 1, 1956, 2.

serve in the same way."[4] Porter's tone of lamentation suggests that he feared that Hobgood's "sympathy, courtesy, and understanding" would not persist as she handed off her pens and typewriter to the next generation of hospital staff.[5]

This chapter traces the growth and feminization of the clerical workforce, and the subsequent ways those changes came to be seen as a problem for the university, from the 1930s to the 1960s, placing women such as Hobgood within that broader trajectory. Akin to the racialized food service and janitorial staff, clerical workers' experiences reveal how ideas about race and gender buttressed the social legitimacy of the modern "academic empire" and were embedded into its foundation. Duke was moving to the forefront of modern, innovative education, but it was also reliant upon the highly gendered labor of white female clerical workers, who occupied a liminal class status and had limited opportunities for advancement.

Yet, clerical workers occupied a distinct milieu than most service employees at Duke, and those differences provide a window into the complex workings of power and status in higher education. Whereas administrators and students frequently expected service workers to perform the stereotypes and duties of racialized household servants of the South, administrators wanted to imagine white clerical workers as wives and mothers of the university itself. Their labor was at once more reputable and less conspicuous.[6] Like clerical workers in financial institutions at the turn of the century, clericals "engendered" the university bureaucracy through their respectable but, in administrators' eyes, marginal labor.[7]

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[4] "What's In a Handicap? – Ask P.T.," *Intercom*, Oct. 1, 1959, 1; Charles Frenzel, "Supt's Corner," *Intercom*, Oct. 1, 1958, 2.

[5] F. Ross Porter, "Supt's Corner," *Intercom,* Feb. 1, 1956, 2.

[6] Angel Kwolek-Folland, *Engendering Business: Men and Women in the Corporate Office, 1870-1930* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 30-31.

[7] See Kwolek-Folland, *Engendering Business*.

Hobgood's retirement represented an important moment of transition and reflection among administrators and workers as to what it meant to be a clerical employee at Duke University and Hospital. In the early 1950s, administrators began to feel a growing unease about clerical workers. In the 1930s and 1940s, administrators and faculty recruited white women as clerical workers, but their numbers remained relatively small. Now, administrators eyed uneasily the salary costs of an expanding clerical class and lamented the managerial challenges posed by the scope and distribution of these workers. But, perhaps even more importantly, administrators felt a rising anxiety about what they viewed as waning loyalty and, frighteningly, a loss of femininity among female clerical workers. Hobgood and other, long-serving clerical workers served as a simulacrum of a half-imagined past – when faculty, administrators and clerical workers were "one big happy family" and clerical workers were unfailingly kind, generous, and motherly.[8] Faced with the clerical challenges posed by the university's continued expansion, then, administrators feared a gendered problem as much as a financial one.

Clerical workers also sometimes expressed a growing discomfort with their status on campus in the postwar period. However, clerical workers' concerns rarely mirrored administrators' more alarmist language. Their fears were more muted, and usually focused on different sorts of problems. Whereas administrators fixated on budgetary constraints and gendered disorder, clerical workers confronted feelings of financial insecurity, fears of technological obsolescence, and downward social mobility. As employees developed their own individual responses to these pressures, they sometimes undermined administrators'

[8] Frenzel, "Supt's Corner," *Intercom,* Oct. 1959, 2.

plans to reform their work and at other times legitimized powerful gendered understandings of their position.

As a fulcrum point in the history of clerical work at Duke, this period of reassessment laid bare the role that clerical work played in the modern university. Across the nation, clerical workers were becoming a larger, more prominent, and more economically central sector of the nation's workforce than ever before. Prompted by these changes, Duke's employees and administrators set out to clarify the status and function of clerical workers within the postwar university. But, in confronting this challenge, administrators often misunderstood the ways it represented a culmination of the longer-term tensions in clerical workers' peculiarly liminal status at Duke, where they were simultaneously privileged and restrained by their racial and gender status. Employees' and administrators' collective efforts to legitimate the history of clerical work and the status of clerical workers hastened the transformation of that work in unexpected and, for many involved, unsettling ways.

MAKING A CLERICAL CLASS: GENDER AND ACADEMIC PROFESSIONALISM IN THE 30S AND 40S

In the early twentieth century, clerical work had begun to take on an increasingly gendered character in the business world.[9] By 1930, women comprised more than half of all

[9] A robust and fascinating literature has been produced on the feminization of clerical work at the turn of the 20th century. See Kwolek-Folland, *Engendering Business*; Lisa Fine, *Souls of the Skyscraper: Female Clerical Workers in Chicago, 1870-1930* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990); Sharon Hartman Strom, *Beyond the Typewriter: Gender, Class, and the Origins of Modern American Office Work, 1900-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992); Margery Davies, *Woman's Place is at the Typewriter: Office Work and Office Workers, 1870-1930* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982); and Ileen DeVault, *Sons and Daughters of Labor: Class and Clerical Work in Turn-of-the-Century Pittsburgh* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990). The period of 1870-1930, in particular, has attracted almost all of the historical focus on clerical work, with another burst of attention around the 1970s. This temporal focus makes sense, given that clerical work shifted from predominantly male to predominantly female during this time. However, in 1930, clerical work was still only 53% female (Kwollek-Folland, 4), and the process of defining clerical work continued to play out in new offices. The uneven nature of feminization did not preclude, of course, the implementation of sex-based hierarchies within clerical work, but it did often require a reassertion, and sometimes revision, of the link between femininity and clerical work in each new setting. For the intervening period, see Mary Christine Anderson, "Gender, Class, and Culture: Women Secretarial and Clerical Workers in the United States, 1925-

clerical workers in the United States. Duke's administrators drew from this context as they set out to establish the university as a leading educational and medical institution in the South. The university's expanded and ambitious structure led to a greater need for record keeping and interdepartmental communication. In meeting those needs, administrators constructed a class of female clerical employees who possessed the formal skills and projected the cultural image that they came to believe was essential to the university's maturation and rising prestige.

The rise of the academic clerical workforce was deeply connected with the university's modernization. At Duke, and in the knowledge economy more generally, the growing number of clerical workers facilitated and smoothed the sometimes-painful transformation from bucolic rural college to burgeoning university. According to historians, a class of administrators began to differentiate their role from the faculty through a growing emphasis on fundraising, statistics, institutional self-studies, and comparative reports within early twentieth century colleges.[10] Perhaps no figure more potently illustrates the tensions inherent in that transformation than the kindly college president turned "academic executive officer."[11]

President William Few, who oversaw the transition from Trinity College to Duke University, personified the day-to-day administrative challenges of this transformation. Few's predecessor at Trinity College, John Kilgo, famously wrote his own thank you letters,

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1955" (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 1986) and Margaret Hedstrom, "Automating the Office: Technology and Skill in Women's Clerical Work, 1940-1970" (PhD diss., The University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1988).

[10] See Laurence Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965); John Thelin, *A History of Higher Education* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011).

[11] Christopher J. Lucas, *American Higher Education: A History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 186-191 (quote on 188).

even "to humble people, sometimes to the colored man who would drive him to and from the railway station."[12] Even though Few and his successor, Robert Flowers, maintained an aura of personal accessibility and collegiality, they relied on their secretaries to take dictation and draft both personal and formal correspondence.[13] Longtime secretary Christine Mimm was key in helping them maintain the expected feeling of professorial fellowship amid massive changes. When an unexpected guest stopped by, anticipating familiarity, she would sneak into Few's office ahead of the guest and surreptitiously provide him with the background he needed to pretend intimacy.[14] The president of a small college could, and was expected to, cultivate close personal relationships with the college community and retain the minute knowledge of that community required to do so. But the president of a modern university privileged other administrative duties, and that personal knowledge was now housed in the secretary's files, if not in her brain.

The history of Duke Hospital's management further reveals the ways that gendered clerical work became deeply implicated in the knowledge economy. While historians of managerial professionalism have largely decoupled the processes from that of clerical feminization, management decisions in the hospital illuminate the symbiotic relationship between these processes.[15] Over the course of the early twentieth century, doctors in

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[12] Christine Mimms to Edgar Knight, UNC School of Education, May 2, 1949, Christine Mimms Papers, Duke University Archives.

[13] Molly Cherry Taylor, "Now I'll Have to Break in Another One," c. 1960, clipping, Mimms Papers.

[14] Ibid.

[15] The classic work in this vein is Alfred Chandler, *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1977). See also Sanford Jacoby, *Employing Bureaucracy: Managers, Unions, and the Transformation of Work in American Industry, 1900-1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); and Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007). The same pattern tends to hold in studies of particular professions, like medicine. See below. Scholars of the feminization of clerical work have done a much better job of avoiding this pitfall. See Angel-Kwollek, *Engendering Business*; and Strom, *Beyond the Typewriter* in particular.

hospitals across the country shed many of the administrative tasks they had previously personally performed.[16] The renowned physician Dr. Wilburt Davison, the star recruit of the hospital launch and dean of the medical school for decades, initially micromanaged the hospital's nascent construction project and cast a long administrative shadow. But even Davison had neither the time nor the capacity to manage the increasingly sprawling hospital business. For a time, Davison, like many hospital administrators across the nation, ceded those duties to the head nurse.[17]

But Duke's administrators eventually came to believe that "the modern hospital" needed "a new type of management, a management sound in basic business concepts but specialized in the peculiarities of hospital operation."[18] So Davison began taking on a couple of young *men* with good "personal qualifications" for apprenticeships in hospital administration.[19] The process for selecting these candidates was as much about perceptions of middle-class manhood as it was administrative qualifications: "selection is based on men not [academic] courses. Personal qualifications are of prime importance."[20] Duke's program, one of only two in the nation at the time, started small and initially served mostly as a feeder system for the hospital's own administrative needs. But, out of it, "a new profession was born."[21] As these programs spread and further professionalized, new superintendents and

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[16] Paul Starr, *Social Transformation of American Medicine* (New York: Basic Books, 1982). Starr does not mention the clerical consequences of this process.

[17] Starr, *Social Transformation*. See correspondence between Davison and Bessie Baker, Boxes 12 and 13, Wilburt Davison Records, Duke University Medical Center Archives.

[18] Frenzel, "Supt's Corner," *Intercom*, June 1959, 2.

[19] "Hospital Administration: Challenge to Mind and Heart," *Intercom*, June 1959, 1.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Frenzel, "Supt's Corner," *Intercom*, June 1959, 2.

other hospital administrators also relieved administratively-inclined nurses of their organizational duties, with significant material consequences. In 1935, Duke Hospital Superintendent Frederick Altvater commanded a salary of $6250 a year, while Dean of Nursing Bessie Baker made $4000.[22] Davison had determined that the Hospital needed a special sort of credentialed management, and that those managers should be men.

While individual doctors and professors like Davison sometimes abandoned the administrative responsibilities formerly required of them to a new class of administrators and superintendents, they bequeathed other tasks downward to clerical workers, in part to further professionalize their own roles. For doctors, having a female secretary became evidence of their importance. In a reversal of the trend toward clerical pooling in the broader business world, the hospital's central Dictaphone office was disbanded in favor of an "individual secretary system" in the 1930s to better meet the clerical needs of doctors who came to demand constant attention.[23] At the same time, hospital superintendents and other administrators launched whole new clerical departments, such as billing and medical records, to manage the burgeoning record-keeping needs of an increasingly sprawling enterprise. These, too, hospital administrators explicitly staffed with women.[24] The creation of new administrative structures within hospital and university management consisted of a growing clerical class of workers whose very presence buttressed the authority of the professionalized masculine occupations at the top of the hierarchy.

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[22] "Duke Hospital Budget, 1934-1940," Box 15, Treasurer Records.

[23] "Her Heart and Life Centered in the Hospital," *Intercom*, June 1955, 2. For comparison to typing pool in business, see Kwolek-Folland, *Engendering Business*, 115.

[24] Elkins & Durham, CPA, to Flowers, May 8, 1936, Box 8, Robert Lee Flowers Records, DU Archives.

For faculty and administrators, the growing social and political prestige of the university compounded both the bureaucratic demands laid at their feet and the impetus to delegate those tasks. Though the typing bureau on campus was not entirely disbanded as it was in the hospital, in the early 1940s, departments began to argue that having their own dedicated clerical employee would relieve a "very serious problem" for the typing pool.[25] Resenting having to share a clerical employee with another department, professors and department chairs viewed the approval of a "full-time secretary" as a testament to the legitimacy of their fields or expertise.[26] The divinity school cited the "rapid growth in office work with the growth of our church enterprise," in its application to expand their clerical corps and further subdivide the work between a secretary and a stenographer.[27] Departments like Political Science touted their newfound ability to "promptly care for adequately the general correspondence" in promoting good will and advancing "the department work."[28] While departments used the presence of dedicated clerical workers as evidence of their importance, individual professors and instructors enhanced the value of their intellectual labor when they protested having to "use their time for stenographic work instead of putting it on preparing lessons and other instructional work."[29] Administrators and individual faculty

[25] A.M. Webb, Chairman, Romance Languages to Mr. C.B. Markham, Treasurer, July 22, 1940, Box 15, Treasurer Records. Christopher Lucas suggests that faculty were ambivalent about the university's bureaucratization. My research finds that faculty also drove the process because it saved them time and added to the prestige of their work. Christopher Lucas, *American Higher Education: A History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 191-3.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Frank Hickman, Dean of the Chapel, to Robert Flowers, President, June 27, 1946, Box 25, Flowers Records.

[28] Webb to Markham, July 22, 1940.

[29] Walter Seeley to Flowers, Aug. 1, 1935, Box 8, Flowers Records.

on Duke's campus saw the growth of a clerical class as indicative of, and necessary to, their own status as respected professionals.

Furthermore, by sometimes framing these complaints as concern about "high priced stenographic work," instructors recast a social claim to prestige as a straightforward case of efficiency.[30] Department heads began to complain that it was "quite useless" to try to hire new faculty if they could not expect "competent assistance" when they arrived to Duke.[31] For their part, administrators legitimized these relationships in business terms, arguing that "a considerable part of the process" of forming a sound business organization was "delegation to subordinate positions."[32] In this conception, the university's swelling bureaucratic character – peopled by a few masculine professionals and large numbers of female 'help' – became *the* symbol of modern progress and advancement.

The Forestry Department's discussion of their proposed budget with Treasurer Charles Markham in 1943 offers a particularly evocative example of this process. Asked to "show cause" for hiring another secretary, Professor Clarence Korstian offered a remarkably detailed account of the various jobs performed by his department's clerical staff. One woman kept all the student records, managed the budget, and prepared requisitions. Another was "normally engaged in dictation, typing, mimeographing, and other clerical work." Still another kept "detailed permanent financial records for the forest" and managed payrolls. A fourth assisted one professor whose work was "very largely statistical and requires an enormous amount of computational work," as well as preformed "general clerical and

[30] Ibid.

[31] Justin Miller to Few and Flowers, June 3, 1931, Box 8, Flowers Records.

[32] "Duke University, Business Administration Division," report, Feb. 5, 1948, Box 23, Minah Records. For decentralized, bureaucratic management in industry, see Chandler, *The Visible Hand*.

computational work" for other research projects. He ended his appeal by reiterating that the department needed one more clerical staff member "unless we expect our [faculty] to perform all of the large amount of routine computing and other clerical work involved."[33] That computational work was both "routine" and essential to the scholarly reputation of Duke's forestry department.

As Korstian's letter makes clear, even as administrators and faculty increasingly offloaded their clerical tasks, they sometimes celebrated the skill that labor required in order to further enhance their professional status. When the law school lobbied for permission to hire an executive secretary away from the University of Iowa, with a considerable salary of $175 per month, they asserted that there was "no more important cog in the wheel" of a prestigious law program than a secretary.[34] Department heads in particular repeatedly bemoaned having to "break in another girl," and insisted that it "cannot be expected that a young girl who has had no contact with such work should be competent to fill such a position."[35] The library likewise demanded that they be allowed to hire educated and trained stenographers "even in minor positions," if they were expected to maintain an appropriate standard of service.[36] Scholars of clerical work have noted the reliance of secretaries on reflected prestige – that is, the respectability of their jobs reflected the status of their supervisor.[37] Faculty members' ambivalent description of clerical workers suggests that

[33] Clarence Korstian to Markham, July 30, 1943, Box 15, Treasurer Records.

[34] Miller to Few and Flowers, June 3, 1931.

[35] Miller to Few and Flowers, May 20, 1931, and Miller to Few and Flowers, June 3, 1931, Box 8, Flowers Records.

[36] "Regarding the Administration of the Library," memorandum, 1933, Box 8, Flowers Records.

[37] For discussions of reflected prestige, see, for instance, Katherine Turk, "Labor's Pink-Collar Aristocracy: The National Secretaries Association's Encounters with Feminism in the Age of Automation," *Labor: Studies in*

prestige reflected upward as well. By describing these clerical positions as simultaneously routine and skilled, necessary but merely supportive, university faculty, doctors, and administrators might doubly emphasize their own importance.

Though a slow process, university administrators were developing a management philosophy and hierarchy similar to that which had taken hold in the business world. Historian Angel Kwolek-Folland has shown that, at the turn of the century, financial industries like banks and insurance agencies gradually turned to women to perform the clerical tasks that were increasingly necessary to their "modern development."[38] Moreover, the men and women who ran and labored in these offices used gendered ideas – of trained and dedicated men and dutiful, loyal, and subservient women – to forge new definitions of work and business and to differentiate the managerial (masculine) jobs from routine clerical (feminine) ones. Though they were unlikely to think of themselves as business-oriented, university administrators and faculty began to mimic these structures of managerial professionalism already established in the business world.

University administrators and faculty also mirrored bureaucratic processes in the business world in other ways. In Progressive-era America, new notions of corporate domesticity helped to ease people's minds about the threats of "corporate greed, unfair business practices, and extremes of wealth."[39] Likewise, Duke's administrators managed to obscure the university's first movements toward bureaucratization in the early twentieth century by drawing on familial networks and metaphors. Some women like Francis

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Working-Class History of the Americas 11, no. 2 (July 2014), 96-98; and Karen Brodkin Sacks, *Caring by the Hour: Women, Work, and Organizing at Duke Medical Center* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 86.

[38] Kwollek-Folland, *Engendering Business*, 2.

[39] Ibid.

Huntington Swett accepted official clerical positions at the institution as a direct extension of their roles as university wives. When her husband was hired to launch the hospital's Department of Anatomy, Swett established a "part-time association…in the role first of chart maker and tabulator…[eventually accepting] more and more duties delegated to the department head until ultimately [assuming] management of all purchasing and finances of the department." Importantly, the eulogy that detailed her considerable responsibilities noted that "in a sense she became a reimbodiment [sic] of her mother" who took in medical students as boarders.[40] Her clerical and administrative labors were thus equated with a maternal, caring role.

Swett's role in her husband's department exemplified how faculty both increasingly expected that paid staff members would perform their administrative tasks and anticipated that women would fill those roles. Swett might have sought employment at Duke out of personal interest or financial necessity, but her eventual absorption into the clerical ranks reflected patterns within academia as well as in the business world. Swett had considerable work experience as well as enviable educational credentials before marrying her husband, but not the proper preparation to assume faculty status herself.[41] While it remained more common for faculty wives without faculty appointments to serve ceremonial roles as "matriarch[s]," Swett's trajectory may have drawn from similar traditions of a gendered division of familial labor within the professional classes.[42]

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[40] "Mrs. Francis Huntington Swett," *Intercom*, Dec. 1955, 1.

[41] Ibid.

[42] For faculty wives, see Katherine Turk, "'The Hand That Rocks the Cradle Should Rock the U. of C.': The Faculty Wife and the Feminist Era," *Journal of Women's History* 26, no. 2 (Summer 2014): 113-134.

This journey from family helper to department employee, repeated by several other women at Duke, represented the evolution of a kind of "professor's wife" role found in small Northeastern colleges a century earlier by historian Margaret Sumner.[43] Sumner's history of the early 19th century "collegiate republic" revealed the myriad ways in which wives of faculty and administrators shaped college society through their formal and informal labors.[44] Some professors handled their own correspondence and performed their intellectual labor solely within the isolation of their own minds, but many more did not, and had not for centuries. Though generally performed in the home, women's "college work" as organizers, chaperones, and correspondents helped cultivate both the milieu and the networks essential to the success of the early national collegiate project.[45] Women like Swett, who began to take on this academic support work in an official capacity, acted as a bridge between the "domestic" organization of these tasks and the formal bureaucratic world that was emerging in the early twentieth century.

Though administrators were preoccupied by the idea of office wives like Swett, they did not represent the true diversity of the university's clerical workforce. Many of these women were actually from more humble backgrounds. Local women like Loetitia Steele knew that "as Duke expands it will naturally require more people to carry on the work" and sought appointments there.[46] Some seem to have hailed from the city's small but growing

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[43] Margaret Sumner, *Collegiate Republic: Cultivating an Ideal Society in Early America* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2014). *Hill's Durham (Durham County, NC) City Directory* (Richmond: Hill Directory Co., 1932, 1935, 1938, 1941).

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid., 47-83, 117-155.

[46] Miss Loetitia Steele to Frank Brown, Secretary, June 20, 1932, Box 1, Frank Brown Papers, DU Archives. This class diversity was happening in the for-profit sector as early as the turn of the century. Ileen DeVault, *Sons and Daughters of Labor*; Fine, *Souls of Skyscraper*, 19-24; Strom, *Beyond the Typewriter*.

clerical class – Mrs. D.P. Weaver, Alice Fleming, and Mrs. M. R. Hooker all clerked at other businesses before Duke.[47] One historian of Durham has noted that young, working-class women sometimes recoiled from the dirty jobs performed by their parents.[48] Marva Terry put herself through commercial school while working at Liggett & Myers in order to work in a more hospitable environment.[49] Women like Epie VanWagoner, Lena Hardesty, and Nelle Paschall, were married to men with decidedly working-class jobs, like mechanics, clothes cleaners, and tobacco workers.[50] Their wages might have been essential to the family's maintenance. Other women, like Margaret Byrd, seem to have gone to work at Duke after being widowed.[51] Given the centrality of tobacco and textile production to Durham's economy, Duke likely represented a clean, safe, attractive job for striving white women, and a rare job where working and middle-class women labored side by side.

But if many of Duke's clerical workers came from local working-class families, Duke's Women's College served as another primary recruiting pool. Well-educated and tied into the Duke community, these young graduates were viewed as already loyal and easily assimilable to the university's work culture.[52] Recognizing that educated women still enjoyed

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[47] *Hill's Durham (Durham County, NC) City Directory* (Richmond: Hill Directory Co., 1929, 1932, 1935, 1938, 1941).

[48] Dolores Janiewski, *Sisterhood Denied: Race, Gender, and Class in a New South Community* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1985), 121. Women elsewhere often felt this way too. See Fine, *Souls of the Skyscraper*, 29-50.

[49] "Miss Marva Terry Outstanding Employee," *Intercom*, June 1959.

[50] *Hill's Durham (Durham County, NC) City Directory* (Richmond: Hill Directory Co., 1929, 1932, 1935, 1938, 1941).

[51] Ibid.

[52] "Libraries Annual Report," c. 1940, Box 34, Flowers Records; Alice Baldwin to Flowers, Apr. 30, 1941, Box 15, Flowers Records.

few opportunities outside of teaching and clerical work, the leadership of the Women's College encouraged their graduates to transition into respectable and relatively well-paid work on campus and even arranged for them to take classes in the local secretarial school while at Duke.[53] Female students often took part-time work as stenographers and typists under New Deal-era work programs, which might have given them valued experiences or connections.[54] Charlotte Kueffner, Mary Yarbrough, Edith Markham, and M. Glasson were among the young women who went directly from studying at Duke to working at its new hospital in the 1930s.[55]

Still, even when real ties of kinship did not exist to clarify and strengthen relations at Duke, supervisors, faculty, and clerical employees often used the familial rhetoric that cast the employment environment as semi-domestic. Administrators, managers, and even clerical employees used these powerful familial metaphors well into the postwar period, sometimes casting the university itself as a personified paterfamilias. Christine Mimms served as the secretary to six different university presidents, and boasted of having merged "her own personality into that of each president, learning to please him and the University."[56] Her relationship to the university's first president, William Few, was such that "he would see her home" in his chauffeured vehicle every evening.[57] In her recollections, he behaved as her

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[53] Alice Baldwin, Dean, Women's College, to Mrs. Dorothy Dyer, July 19, 1943, Box 1, College Organization for General Service Records, DU Archives.

[54] Ben Patrick to Upchurch, Student Activities Office, Nov. 14, 1934, Box 1, Treasurer Records; Marjorie Collier to MacLean, June 6, 1941, Box 1, Treasurer Records.

[55] *Hill's Durham (Durham County, NC) City Directory* (Richmond: Hill Directory Co., 1932, 1935, 1938); and *Duke Chanticleer*, 1930-1938.

[56] Taylor, "Now I'll Have to Break In Another One," Mimms Papers. Margaret Hedstrom found similar discourse in the financial industries during the period. Hedstrom, "Automating the Office."

[57] Ibid.

protector as much as her employer. Though Mimm acknowledged the limits of Few's amiable paternalism, noting that two earlier secretaries had ended their tenures in tears, she nonetheless seemed to accept their relationship and these gestures as evidence of his familial regard for her.

More often, secretarial employees used maternal language to describe their relationships to faculty members, even when the age difference was reversed. As Marion Procher left her position in the economics department to get married, she hoped that the "men…would be looked after by a new secretary" in her absence, as she had developed a "maternal concern for their welfare!"[58] In positioning themselves in domestic terms as wives or mothers of their male administrative or faculty 'charges,' Mimm and Procher adopted familiar roles that celebrated desexualized male authority, but which also lent an air of legitimacy to their own roles.

Besides the familial metaphor, administrators also frequently described clerical workers in terms that celebrated other markers of middle-class whiteness and femininity. They thus served as a manifestation of the university's magnanimity. And that status as respectable white women came with important rights. Concerned for ensuring the proper environs for the clerical staff, Frederick Hanes made it a condition of his major donation in 1940 that administrators remedy a situation that was "highly discreditable to the Hospital" and build a "decent place" for the secretaries and technicians to rest.[59] No doubt a welcome addition to their work experiences, such a condition nevertheless confirmed their gendered and racialized roles within the university's increasingly bureaucratic landscape. As white

[58] Marion Procher Jones to Charles Jordan, Box 2, Charles Jordan Papers, DU Archives.

[59] Frederick Hanes to Few and Davison, memorandum, July 14, 1940, Box 14, Flowers Records.

women, they were entitled to a safe, comfortable place to take their breaks. At once powerful and vulnerable, they served as indispensable reminders of the university's best nature and required its protection.

Furthermore, prewar administrators seemed to expect white female clerical workers to operate smoothly within a spectrum of feminine tasks ranging from housekeeping to nursing in a way that reflected the plasticity of their roles as paragons of white womanhood. Administrators required secretaries to step in and perform "chaperonage if more than one nurse [was] required" and sometimes shuttled employees among clerical, matronage, and library work.[60] In the hospital, department secretaries supervised the work of the black orderlies and porters assigned to their general work area, tracing their movements as they entered and left the office.[61] In the minds of Duke administrators, black service workers could not be fully trusted with freedom of movement or unfettered access to private white spaces. Secretaries, like white housekeepers, sometimes played the role of household manager in the vein of the Southern matriarch.

Many female employees themselves seem to have viewed clerical work as one of several appropriate positions for respectable women at the university. Clerical employees and candidates frequently deployed a similarly flexible view of the relationship between clerical skills and other traits associated with white womanhood. Women trained as nurses sometimes took clerical jobs at the university after leaving active nursing.[62] And while some applicants emphasized their training in commercial courses, many also frequently highlighted

[60] Notes from administrative conference, Jan. 16, 1933, Box 12, Wilburt Davison Records, Duke University Medical Center Archives.

[61] "Job Description, Errand Porter to Dean's Office," n.d. Box 26, Davison Records.

[62] Mrs. W.G. Martin, "Matron, Nurse, and Filing Clerk," application, Mar. 8, 1927, Brown Papers.

work experiences in waitressing, physical education, and teaching.[63] Of course, many applicants to the university boasted experience with office machinery and routines. Still, in the context of the early 20th century American university, administrators largely assumed these women merely needed to perform the ostensibly inherent skills of their gender.

Despite the increasingly gendered nature of clerical work in the prewar period, some men stayed in clerical jobs. This unevenness mirrored the process of feminization at commercial institutions, and likely reflected the woeful conditions of the Depression-era labor market that famously put white-collar men on the streets and depressed industrial wages still further.[64] Yet even as the line between 'feminine'/clerical and 'masculine'/managerial jobs continued to be negotiated, employees and administrators deployed gendered notions to police the boundary and make claims as to the character of specific jobs. As early as 1936, administrators sought to distinguish between "the clerk type" role that could be filled by a woman and one that needed "a man with executive ability…a broad man."[65] After bookkeeper Walter Whitted died, Treasurer Markham told one female applicant that "I expect that we will find it necessary to employ a man for that particular position," despite employing women as bookkeepers elsewhere.[66] Edward Raper was a Duke alum who served as "business manager" of the Private Diagnostic Clinic beginning in 1931.

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[63] See for examples, Mary Jane Clark to McLean, July 28, 1941, Box 1, Office of the Bursar Records, DU Archives.

[64] See Hedstrom, "Automating the Office," 77-92 on impact of Great Depression on white-collar male workers. See letters from Chandler Smith, Davis Dunn, M.L. McCullen, and Leo Blackman for examples of men writing administrators to look for work. Box 15, Treasurer Records.

[65] James Thomas to Flowers, Apr. 13, 1936, Box 8, Flowers Records.

[66] Markham to Miss Jean McLean, June 28, 1938, Box 1, Treasurer Records. Bookkeepers often remained more male dominated than other clerical professions. See Fine, *Souls of the Skyscraper*, 92.

The title of business manager bestowed on Raper an authority and significance that set him above the average clerical worker at the hospital. This linguistic and social sleight of hand obscured the gender disruption posed by male employees like Roper who lingered in potentially clerical roles.

Similar observations linking femininity with clerical work and masculinity with management were used to make sense of who should do what work into the postwar period. The most ambitious and long-serving of female administrative workers sometimes found their positions and labors minimized in order to masculinize and, thus, professionalize new mid-level administrative positions. When senior administrators refused to make Mrs. Lucile K. Boyden's position as acting director of the Bureau of Public Information permanent, they effusively praised her as an "interesting lady of culture and refinement and of unusual ability…a lady of real personal charm and the very best of character…a loyal and efficient servant" whose work was not "unsatisfactory in any way."[67] Still, they ultimately decided that the Bureau needed to be led "by a man." The new Director of the Bureau of Public Information confirmed that, in his estimation, the "demands of this office require that a man hold down the job," not least because it required they be "thrown with various types of people."[68] Despite actually performing the work of the director, Boyden's femininity made her either too delicate or too dangerous to represent Duke's interest in the social world of alumni relations.

By the postwar period, the growing cadre of clerical workers that filled the ranks of universities' workforces had become essential to the functioning of American medical-

[67] Jordan to Mr. O.A. Fetch, Resident Manager, Government Services, Inc., Jan. 11, 1950, Box 2, Jordan Papers; Edward Fike to Fetch, Dec. 14, 1949, Box 2, Jordan Papers.

[68] Fike to Fetch; Jordan to Fetch.

educational complexes like Duke. It was they who managed what historian C. Wright Mills called the "billion slips of paper that gear modern society into its daily shape."[69] One postwar personnel director at Duke declared clerical employees "the 'bread and butter' group because [they play] such an important part in the conduct of daily business at all administrative levels." [70] University faculty and administrators welcomed the relief from bureaucratic drudgery these workers offered and even managed to interpret the growing presence of secretarial and clerical employees as testament to their own prestige. For their part, Duke Hospital Co-Superintendents Minetree Pyne and Lou Swanson acknowledged that management was easier in the hospital's early days, when "life was a little more leisurely," but argued that the new and expanding staff was "essential to fulfill modern medicine's capabilities."[71] In many ways, then, clerical growth was the very marker of modern education and medicine. As administrators used that labor to construct an ever-more complex university system, they embedded notions of patriarchal gendered order into its foundations. But even as clerical workers grew increasingly central to the university's functioning, administrators began to view their mushrooming numbers with alarm and even suspicion.

IMAGINING A CRISIS IN CLERICAL WORK: POSTWAR PRESSURES CREATE GENDERED FEARS

The report that landed on President Flowers's desk in February 1948 carried profoundly mixed news. Earlier that year, Duke administrators had sought the advice of the prestigious management consulting firm McKinsey and Company to help prepare the

[69] C. Wright Mills, *White-Collar: The American Middle Classes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), 189.

[70] John Dozier, "Plight of the Non-Academic Employee at Duke University," report, Sept. 15, 1965, Box 16, Douglas Knight Records, DU Archives.

[71] "Happy New Year!" *Intercom*, Nov. 1, 1953, p 1.

university for the great postwar future they imagined.[72] Administrators hoped to continue expanding Duke's size and prestige, but they had concerns about the thousands of people in the university's non-academic staff. The eagerly anticipated review only confirmed those fears, offering a damning assessment of the university's ad hoc personnel system and leveeing especially harsh critiques of the handling of the university's clerical employees.

For the McKinsey consultants, the university's clerical personnel management system was a particular problem. With no formal procedures for hiring, "the basis of selection…[was] largely dependent on whether or not the candidate is known to one of the employees in the Department."[73] Administrators had allowed lax oversight, poor training, low morale, and high turnover to fundamentally erode any semblance of "budgetary control."[74] The university faced, in short, a clerical crisis.

Still, the McKinsey consultants thought that Duke's path forward was clear. In a report otherwise focused on personnel policies, they prescribed gendered order as part of the solution. Without a union or complex legal issues to deal with, they need only find "a man" with a little "intelligent interest in this work" who would bring order and efficiency to the university personnel system.[75] Duke administrators adopted many of McKinsey's

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[72] For history of McKinsey and the management consulting business more broadly see Christopher McKenna, *The World's Newest Profession: Management Consulting in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006) and Louis Hyman, *Temp: How American Work, American Business, and the American Dream Became Temporary* (New York: Viking, 2018), 67- 83. McKenna has an excellent chapter exploring the way that these management consulting businesses shaped nonprofit management, and in particular universities, through their advocacy of decentralized management systems. McKenna rightly notes the ambivalence with which these universities responded to consultants' plans, as well as the uniform lack of an organizational chart. However, I think he does overemphasize the newness of universities' outreach to business, and their interest in identifying themselves as a separate, special sector of the economy.

[73] McKinsey & Company, "Report on Establishment of Budgetary Control Program," June 1948, Box 7, Business Division Records, DU Archives.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid.

recommendations, including finding just such a man. However, while hiring a man with a little "interest" likely reassured administrators initially, their feelings of insecurity and concern proved stubborn and persistent.

For Duke administrators, the problem within the university's clerical ranks appeared slowly at first, and then all at once. Despite the various impulses promoting clerical development in the prewar period, growth was initially restrained when compared to later periods.[76] But universities across the nation experienced another period of enormous growth in the middle of the century, whether measured by enrollments, endowments, or employment. And at institutions like Duke, clerical workers comprised the largest single group of nonacademic employees by the late 1940s.[77] Duke did not regularly track employment figures until the 1960s, but partial evidence reveals that the ranks of clerical workers expanded at a steady pace that reflected the institution's growth as well as changing bureaucratic demands. By 1960, more than one thousand clerical employees worked at Duke, at a cost of between $2000 and $3600 a year each.[78] When finally taking stock in the postwar years of the sprawling enterprise that was Duke University and Hospital, administrators were awed and alarmed at the sheer scope of the clerical workforce, as well as the cost required to maintain it. However, while administrators grew increasingly dismayed at the spiraling costs

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[76] Bindewald to Mimms, June 9, 1967, Box 7, Vice President for Business and Finance Records [VP Records], DU Archives. The postwar period saw an enormous burst in the number of clerical workers in all sorts of businesses. Secretary work became the single largest occupation for women, accounting for one third of all women workers by 1970, according to Cobble, "Spontaneous Loss of Enthusiasm." Historian Katherine Turk notes that there were 2.5 million clerical workers in 1940, and 9.3 million in 1968. Turk, "Pink-Collar Aristocracy," 91.

[77] Jeffrey Liebmann, "Non-Academic Employees in Higher Education: A Historical Overview" (Paper, Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research, June 22-25, 1986).

[78] "Employment Growth, Duke University," report, Box 9, VP Records; W.G. Cooper, "Comparison of Wage Scales," report, Nov. 1958, Office of Human Resources Reference Collection, DU Archives. Turk finds these vast disparities in clerical work more generally in the period. Turk, "Pink-Collar Aristocracy," 91.

of clerical work in the postwar period, newer pressures often exacerbated the demands for clerical workers.

While costs were a problem, university administrators saw an epidemic of labor shortages and turnover as another significant dimension of the fiscal and administrative challenges they faced. The labor shortages of the Second World War, of course, contributed to a rise in turnover among clerical workers and other staff in the early 1940s.[79] But the war's resolution did not halt staff attrition, and department supervisors continued to identify the "complete lack" of stability among "secretarial help" as their "weakest link."[80] Clerical workers at Duke continued to leave jobs in some departments for others, or for more lucrative jobs in the private sector.[81] Of course, employers in many different fields confronted challenges posed by a shortage of workers considered suitable for the growing number of clerical jobs during this period of full employment and "domestic containment."[82] Moreover, scholars have also noted that female clerical wages began to compare unfavorably to those for women in industrial work, leading to a widespread status anxiety if not an actual exodus from clerical work.[83] Because clerical employees at Duke earned wages below both regional and educational industry averages, many female clerical employees at Duke likely

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[79] For discussion of clerical workers leaving for better-paying jobs in industry, see Hedstrom, "Automating the Office," 92-108.

[80] "Annual Report for Bureau of Public Information," Apr. 1, 1958, Box 35, Knight Records.

[81] Edward Fike, Director, Bureau of Public Information to Charles Jordan, "Re: Personnel," memorandum, May 18, 1951, Box 2, Jordan Papers.

[82] For fears about a shortage of office workers during the period, see Hedstrom, "Automating the Office," 108-125. For a discussion of the pressures on white, middle-class women to return to the domestic sphere during the early Cold War period, see Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 2008).

[83] See Hedstrom, "Automating the Office," 108 – 120, on comparatively low wages for clerical in postwar period.

changed jobs for simple material considerations. Still, even as administrators looked warily upon climbing employment figures, they simultaneously lamented what they perceived as a new inability to recruit and retain qualified employees. There were, at once, too many clerical workers and too few reliable ones.

In addition to the spiraling costs associated with maintaining the university's necessary bureaucracy, both administrators and employees looked with a measure of uneasiness on the cultural changes they encountered as the world of the university continued to transform in the postwar period. Regrettably, the hospital's growth "in size and prestige" had created a culture of "busy and businesslike folks doing a…routine job."[84] When a hospital patient expressed his confusion in locating the insurance office and "commented that he thought there were so many employees at the hospital that it was necessary to number them," he struck a chord with employees and administrators who feared the disorienting and alienating effects of university growth.[85] To critics, the presence of so many clerical workers was a harbinger of encroaching institutionalism and commercialism. Among other schemes to resolve this tension, hospital leadership implemented a plan to introduce "attractive name pins" to clerical workers, which they expected would "contribute much toward our goal of courteous, friendly, and efficient" service.[86] After all, as one secretary put it, "tension is less if you know a person's name."[87] The name tag program stuck, but it remained, like other ideas to emerge, a cosmetic response to a substantive problem. Name tags alone could not

[84] Frenzel, "Supt's Corner," *Intercom*, Oct. 1958, 2; "What People are Saying," *Intercom*, Apr. 1959.

[85] "Miss Medical Center Personality of 1958," *Intercom*, June 1958.

[86] "Name Pin Program Underway," *Intercom*, June 1959.

[87] Marie Price, "Asking Around," *Intercom*, Feb. 1960.

allay employee or administrator discomfort, nor banish entirely the sense of anonymity and strangeness that seemed to pervade the modern hospital-educational complex.

In assessing the work habits and behaviors of the women who worked in clerical positions, administrators diagnosed a formality and emotional remove bordering on frigidity. For their part, Duke's clerical workers sometimes felt underpaid and unappreciated, awash in a sea of unfamiliar faces making incessant, increasingly trying demands. These concerns about a growing culture of institutionalism, paired with alarm at ballooning budgets, appeared as threatening omens to Duke administrators planning the university's future. Clerical workers were too expensive, too numerous, and, increasingly, too "curt and unfriendly."[88]

Administrators often framed their discomfort with bad attitudes in gendered terms. In the hospital in particular, Duke's leadership continued to view the wards and patient rooms as largely the domain of women, even as it became ever more tightly managed by specially-credentialed, white men. Administrators saw these innumerable female workers as both vitally essential and potentially destabilizing. Deeply preoccupied with this tension, hospital superintendents constantly entreated employees to work "not only with the head, but with the heart" and to "Try Smiling." They instituted personality contests, niceness awards, and suggestion boxes in targeted efforts to influence the "women connected with Duke Hospital." [89] Whereas many college administrators had resisted the influx of female students in the early twentieth century due to concerns about their feminizing influence, those viewing the

[88] "Annual Report, 1959-1960," Box 2, Duke Hospital Auxiliary Records, Duke University Medical Center Archives.

[89] Frenzel, "Supt's Corner," *Intercom*, Oct. 1958, 2; "Try Smiling," cartoon, *Intercom*, Apr. 1959, 3; "Personality Contest," *Intercom*, Apr. 1958, 2.

university's bureaucratic transformations through the lens of a clerical crisis looked with apprehension upon the opposite.[90] As Duke became a major employer of women, administrators came to fear not the feminization of the enterprise but the *de*feminization of the female employee.

For hospital administrators, the growing community of volunteers offered a damning contrast to these trends among female clericals. When they diagnosed the need for an employee newsletter in 1953, they turned to the Women's Auxiliary, a volunteer group made up largely of wives of doctors and other university administrators. They cast the project in explicitly, if awkwardly, gendered terms: administrators were the newsletter's "parents" and the auxiliary "its nurse."[91] The Auxiliary prided itself on embodying a particular sense of femininity: "sensitivity….lightness of spirit…cheerfulness which is wholesome and contagious;" in short, "the natural intuition of a woman."[92] In a new world "where almost everyone is a stranger," they domesticated the hospital and made strangers into family.[93] Neither employees nor outsiders, Auxiliary volunteers occupied a rarefied and privileged cultural sphere, credited with bestowing true care and benevolence to an otherwise cold, institutional world. The Auxiliary workers, the superintendent argued, "have given the institution a heart." And not a "heart in terms of 'center' but in terms of compassion, goodwill and sensitive understanding."[94] They brought something "non-prophylactic and

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[90] For discussion of fears about women students "feminizing" the collegiate environment, see Lynn Gordon, *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era* (New Haven: Yale University, 1990).

[91] *Intercom*, Nov. 1953, 1.

[92] "From the Aux," *Intercom*, Apr. 1956.

[93] "Salute to the Ladies in Pink," *The Reader's Digest*, Mar. 1958, clipping, Box 1, Auxiliary Records.

[94] Wendell Weisend, "The Ladies in pink 'Have Given Duke a Heart,'" *Intercom*, Apr. 1954, 3; Minetree Pyne, speech to District 4 meeting of administrators, Jan. 30, 1964, Box 2, Auxiliary Records.

human and warm" to the hospital, effecting a tremendous "change in the attitude of the staff."[95] Such an edifying influence was only necessary because administrative work had seemed to have turned female clericals into bureaucrats.

The hospital administration's concerns manifested the broader tensions of a Cold War culture that promoted white, middle-class domesticity while, at the same time, drawing more white women into the waged workforce.[96] Persistent appeals to the Auxiliary for reminders that "that in *service* comes true satisfaction" suggested a concern that the hospital's female employees had lost something important when they began to accept wages for their labor - when caring became work.[97] Administrators frequently spoke about the benefits of Auxiliary volunteers in remunerative terms: they performed emotional labor "which we cannot buy," but that would be "worth a million dollars" and "bears interest."[98] Unlike the clerical and service workers who were bound by contract and driven by wages, these women volunteers "don't charge over-time for working holidays" and thus offered unadulterated caring.[99] The financial terminology which framed their labors carried power precisely because of its irony– their service was invaluable, literally and figuratively, because it was freely given.

Not all employees were equally guilty of the cardinal sin of venality, according to hospital leadership, but even celebrations of these exemplary women betrayed a fixation on

[95] "Annual Report, 1960-1961," Box 2, Auxiliary Records; Davison, quoted in minutes of General Meeting, Nov. 9, 1951, Box 1, Auxiliary Records.

[96] See May, *Homeward Bound*; Erin Hatton, *The Temp Economy: From Kelly Girls to Permatemps in Postwar America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010).

[97] "From the Auxiliary," *Intercom*, Oct. 1956, emphasis in original. For these fears about the influence of payment on the quality and nature of care in home health, see Boris and Klein, *Caring for America*, 8.

[98] "Salute to the Ladies in Pink," *Reader's Digest*.

[99] Dorothy Sieker, "From the Auxiliary," *Intercom*, Feb. 1958.

what they saw as the broader trend toward emotional remove. Similarly, the juxtaposition of the idealized Auxiliary volunteer with the cold, bureaucratic paid employee reflected poorly on the entire category of employee, even when the comparison was framed as a compliment. One regular employee was praised for doing "her work in the spirit of a volunteer" and another was celebrated for being "no clockwatcher."[100] Increasingly pressed to pay clerical workers wages befitting a contract employee and not a wife, Duke administrators came to view these employees as hardened by their mercenary aims. In short, secretaries could no longer be trusted to offer "loyal and devoted service."[101] Thus, even as administrators on one hand acknowledged the comparatively low wages paid by their institution, they frequently interpreted staff turnover and wage complaints as a crisis of loyalty and commitment.

Administrators' and employees' anxieties about mercenary, frigid secretaries rested on a kind of half-imagined past. As previously discussed, the oft-repeated metaphor of the 'Duke family' did sometimes reflect the actual ties binding faculty and staff to one another, especially in the university's earliest days. Daughters of faculty or administrators frequently took positions on Duke's payroll, especially for short-term assignments. For instance, Beth Pearse's father, a professor, told her about a summer job "substituting for technicians" at Duke Hospital while she was home on break from Mount Holyoke.[102] For the university, arrangements like this permitted a level of staffing flexibility without requiring they invest much time or resources in additional recruiting. Women like Francis Swett, who gained a position in her husband's department, sometimes became literal office wives in numbers that

[100] "Annual Report, 1959-1960," Box 2, Auxiliary Records; "Her Heart and Life Centered in the Hospital," *Intercom*. June 1955.

[101] "Mrs. Hobgood Retires Feb.1," *Intercom,* Feb. 1, 1956, 1.

[102] Beth Pearse to Davison, Jan. 4, 1932, Box 16, Davison Records.

appear more frequent than in the commercial world. According to historian Angel Kwolek-Folland, these kin relationships within clerical ranks, whether real or fictive, served to "domesticate" the workplace and, in Duke's case, provide social legitimacy to a rapidly changing industry.[103]

Still, though administrators placed great emphasis on their presence, matriarchal figures like Francis Swett did not represent the actual social position of many of Duke's early clerical workers. In fact, the administration's celebration of female clerical workers with status-based as well as contract-based relationships with Duke obscured longer-term transformations already underway. Across the country, more women from diverse backgrounds were gaining access to the clerical skills that universities like Duke increasingly found themselves needing.[104] Though the democratization of the university's clerical force seems to have happened slower and later than in the commercial world, Duke's clerical workforce by the 1940s was already characterized by a diversity that belied the "maternal" metaphor.

Yet, a powerful, idealized revision of this complex history nevertheless took hold as administrators confronted the university's expanding bureaucracy in the postwar period. A series of retirements of long-time clerical staff members both catalyzed and confirmed administrator's fears about the disjuncture between clerical workers past and present. Like Swett, women like Sadie Whitfield, Nina Waite, and Burke Hobgood served simultaneously as the final passing reminders of the university's idyllic past and a rebuke of its institutional

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[103] Kwolek-Folland, *Engendering Business*, 129-164. Margery Davies has argued that the feminization of clerical work obscured its proletarianization. Davies, *A Woman's Place*.

[104] For a history of the entrance of upwardly mobile working-class women into clerical ranks, see DeVault, *Sons and Daughters of Labor*.

present. Secretary Henrietta Fagan's work was "to her…an avocation, not simply a job."[105] And in many of these remembrances, administrators framed the importance of their work and social commitments almost exclusively through their relationships with Duke. It was Nina Waite's work at the hospital that brought her "to rest in a locale she is proud to call home."[106] Even her activities "outside of working hours are a result of her pride in being part of the Medical Center."[107] And Waite's "keen appreciation of the value of family ties" – the fact that she lived and worked side by side with two of her sisters – was held up as proof of her fitness for the title of "Miss Medical Center Personality."[108] These retirement tributes sought to deify older clerical workers and contrasted sharply with the administration's repeated lamentations regarding the cold, even rude, behavior of postwar clerical workers.

Nor was the gendered division of clerical and administrative labor as clear as the university's postwar discourse would suggest. Administrators, faculty, and employees used gendered notions to actively negotiate the status of various jobs in the prewar administrative revolutions. Moreover, while administrators and employees continually policed the line dividing 'feminine' and 'masculine' jobs, that line remained unstable into the postwar years. Anne Campbell's unceremonious dismissal from her position at the hospital in 1958 reveals the continued power of gender to professionalize certain jobs in university administration. Protesting her firing, her sons wrote to remind hospital administrators that she had worked at

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[105] "Her Heart and Life Centered in the Hospital," *Intercom*, June 1955. This is especially interesting to note in light of the traditions of age discrimination within clerical work. See Hedstrom, "Automating the Office."

[106] "Miss Medical Center Personality of 1958," *Intercom*, June 1958.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Ibid. Duke administrators' celebration of these older, longer-serving employees seems to set their discourse slightly at odds with that among financial industry managers, who stereotyped older women as rigid and lamented the increasing presence of married women. Hedstrom, "Automating the Office."

the hospital since its opening and, despite her "somewhat lowly position and definitely meagre [sic] salary," was a "faithful and devoted worker."[109] For their part, hospital and university administrators acknowledged that Campbell might not have been formally warned of her upcoming dismissal, but they argued that everyone knew they had contracted with a Credit Manager and that "this phase of our operations was to be reorganized and placed in the hands of male employees."[110] Campbell's role was 'professionalized' out from under her. Senior Duke leadership marked new, lower level positions like Credit Manager as professional by identifying them as masculine and contrasting the job with the feminine workers who could not perform them.

Despite some ambiguity, when administrators conceptualized the clerical challenges they faced, they envisioned those employees as exclusively female. In the hospital, the "masculine" character of hospital administration became so well established and so distinguished from "feminine" clerical jobs that potential moments of disruption could be leavened with humor. In describing the experiences of one hospital administration intern shadowing the business department at the hospital, the employee newsletter noted that he looked "harassed…surrounded by all those girls."[111] Because he was a visitor there sent to learn *from* the women of the office, he was in some ways under their authority. Yet, descriptions of these women serve only to illustrate his exoticism and enhance his prestige. Thus, the way that administrators discussed clerical workers reinforced the gendered nature of that class even as they bemoaned what they saw as gender failure within it.

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[109] Frank Campbell, M.D., to A. Hollis Edens, President, Mar. 25, 1958 and Claude Campbell to Edens, Mar. 29, 1958, Box 42, A. Hollis Edens Records, DU Archives.

[110] Henricksen to Edens, Apr. 14, 1958, Box 42, Edens Records.

[111] "This 'n' That," *Intercom*, Aug. 1954.

FIXING, AND FIXING, AND FIXING THE CLERICAL CRISIS

Thus, Duke's postwar administrative leadership – including President Hollis Edens, and hospital Superintendents Pyne, Lou Swanson, and Ross Porter - accepted to some degree the emerging bureaucratic reality of the knowledge economy. But, at the same time, they also worried over the costs of maintaining a bureaucracy, and especially over what they saw as the changing nature of the workforce. This they shared with colleagues across the nation.[112] The burgeoning number of clerical employees across the college and hospital campuses posed certain managerial challenges for which Duke, like many others, was painfully unprepared. Prior to the Second World War, only five leading institutions of higher education could boast an established personnel program or department, and Duke was not among them.[113] But in 1947, the year that marked the first meeting of the new College and University Personnel Association, Duke joined the growing trend toward professionalizing that function, hiring a Director of Personnel, W.G. Cooper – the "man" that the McKinsey consultants suggested. Though enjoying the more general title of director of personnel, Cooper's mandate revolved entirely around tackling the clerical crisis. The secretary, the stenographer, the mimeograph operator – they were the personnel that required managing.

In his own background and in his mandate, Cooper represented Duke's halting approach to the changing management environment. Cooper shared many characteristics with older supervisors such as Jim Thompson and W.E. Whitford. Like them, Cooper had

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[112] For similar feelings elsewhere, see Donald Albright, "A Study of Personnel Practices for College and University Office and Clerical Workers," (EdD diss., Columbia University, 1953); Liebmann, "Non-Academic Employees in Higher Education." On concerns about the rising costs associated, see McKenna, *The World's Newest Profession*, 115-126.

[113] Liebmann, "Non-Academic Employees in Higher Education." In the postwar period, even small colleges began moving towards a centralized personnel function, Enos Clarendon Smith, *A Study of the Development of the Small College Non-Academic Personnel Program* (Champaign: College and University Personnel Association, 1950).

long-term connections to Duke. Whereas Thompson and Whitford were graduates of Duke, Cooper spent years on Duke's campus in the U.S. Navy's V-12 Unit. Looking for work following his military service, Cooper found that his personal connections – his reputation as a Duke Man – outweighed his lack of training in the emergent fields of personnel management or human resources.[114] And for the first five years, Cooper's job remained rather circumscribed, limited to the management of the university's clerical staff. But at the same time, Cooper and his new department instituted a series of reforms and programs that clearly pointed toward a more modern, formalized approach to clerical employee management, a direction that would be cemented by further changes over the next two decades.[115]

Duke's clerical employment practices, always decentralized, haphazard and relational, had grown utterly unwieldy. Administrators had come to see the old system as woefully inefficient. By leaving it to each individual department to hire, supervise, and negotiate the salaries of such a volume and variety of clerical workers, the university had no way of assuring that they were "recruiting and employing the type person best suited for the job" or following a uniform wage scale.[116] In 1952, clerical workers on the college campus made anywhere between $115 and $300 a month.[117] And, as one industry observer noted, the paternalism inherent in the old system "made favoritism inevitable."[118] New rules, like those

[114] "Dr. Clyde Appointed Marshal of University," *Duke Alumni Register*, Feb. 1948. Cooper was hired first as Veteran's Advisor in 1946. Charles Jordan to Captain C.D. Morrow, USMC, Assistant Rehabilitation Officer, July 22, 1946, Box 2, Jordan Papers.

[115] Comparisons to some of the ways that service work was "formalized" is illustrative here.

[116] W.G. Cooper, "Operation of the Personnel Department," report, c. 1949., Box 30, Edens Records.

[117] W.G. Cooper, "Salary Survey – Clerical Employees," Apr. 2, 1952, Box 8, Edens Records.

[118] Albright, "A Study of Personnel Practices for College and University Office and Clerical Workers."

barring supervisors from hiring family members, sought to prevent at least the appearance of what was now derided as nepotism.[119] Though centralization would take time to establish, the new personnel process required applicants to report first to Cooper's office, where they would be subject to testing and an initial interview before being sent as candidates to whichever department had an opening.[120] Before the creation of a standardized application, clerical candidates simply wrote to a personal contact or even the president of the university, allowing the penmanship or formatting of their letters to serve as the primary testament to their skills.[121] Cooper and other Duke administrators expected that this new personnel system would eventually rationalize and standardize the relationships among faculty, clerical staff, and the administration.

Cooper's first major project was a job evaluation and classification study that the university hoped would provide them with a complete sense of the scope of its clerical employment. Duke administrators hoped the study would "promote the good will of the University" and even aid in the "recruiting of good and faithful employees."[122] Seeking to formalize what he saw as an emerging, but yet unacknowledged, differentiation within the clerical field, Cooper circulated a document with "standard descriptions" of clerical jobs that drew a distinction between those that required "discretion, initiative, and independent

[119] W.G. Cooper to Dr. Robert Cushman, July 10, 1964, Box 33, Divinity School Records, DU Archives.

[120] Cooper, "Operation of the Personnel Department."

[121] See, for instance, letters from Miss Grace J Paschall, Miss Lula Graham, Miss Ruth Landis Burke, and others, Box 15, Treasurer Records.

[122] Cooper, "Operation of the Personnel Department."

judgement" and those that were more "routine" and "simple."[123] Of course, establishing mutually acceptable ways of organizing, categorizing, and remunerating clerical work proved a far more complex and elusive task than a simple survey could perform. Even after the initial job study project, the personnel office had to carry out several additional studies of increasing complexity and detail over the next fifteen years.

The second major prong of the Personnel Department's new program, aimed at confronting the turnover problem, involved what Cooper and other administrators viewed as the most significant challenge to the university's efficient operation: wages. The university, they feared, faced several competitive disadvantages in recruiting and retaining skilled clerical workers, but lagging wages were most important. Periodic area wage surveys and consultations with the state and federal employment services routinely confirmed that Duke

	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955	1960	1965	1969
Service Wages	465-500	465-610	500-780		750-1300	800-1400	1125 - 1980		2560-5632
Clerical Wages	720-2100	720-1800	780-2400	1080 min	1380-3600		1920-3600 (1958)	3016-5628 (1968)	4076-8736
Instructor/ Professor	1500-10,000	2000-10,000	?? - 15,000		2500 min		5150-18,500		

Figure 3.1 Yearly Salaries Compared by Category of Employment.[124]

[123] "Job Descriptions," attachment to Cooper to Department Heads, Jan. 15, 1949, Box 30, Edens Records. For increasing hierarchies among clerical staff in businesses during this period, see Hedstrom, "Automating the Office."

[124] "Duke Hospital Budgets, 1934-1940," Box 15, Office of the Treasurer Records, DU Archive; Elizabeth Kaiser to Mr. W. G. Cooper, St. 29, 1953, Box 8, Minah Records; Kaiser to Cooper, Sept. 28, 1955, Box 8, Minah Records; "Comparison of Wage Scales," Nov. 1958, Human Resources Reference Collection; Bowers to Adams, Sept. 22, 1969, Box 12, VP Records; "Budget Needs Geology Department," 1947, Box 15, Treasurer Records; "Salary Survey – Clerical Employees," Apr. 2, 1952, Box 8, Edens Records; "Durham Labor Market – Confidential," c. 1968, Box 6, Faculty Committee Records; "Faculty Salaries and Fringe Benefits," report, 1962, Box 37, Knight Records.

struggled to pay "market rate around Durham."[125] A 1952 survey revealed that Duke's clerical salaries did not even compare favorably to other educational institutions, and were earning well below their peers in the area.[126] Department heads frequently complained to the administration that they were losing quality employees to "opportunities [with] higher salary" and campus departments even noted that they were losing workers to the hospital.[127] This cannibalism almost certainly confirmed for administrators the necessity of a central personnel office whose primary directive was to "keep salary rates in line; that is, similar jobs in all department paying similar rates."[128] Though hospital and campus administrators lamented the rising "personnel costs" associated with retaining these clerical employees, they also recognized that, like many universities, Duke faced a labor shortage and competition with industry. As Duke's administrators began their efforts to renegotiate the status of clerical workers within the university, to introduce elements of formal and contractual relations, they also had to acknowledge and confront the impact such an approach would invariably have on the remuneration of those jobs.

Paradoxically, administrators' tightening focus on business management was both symptom and further cause of their clerical concerns. As Duke's contract with McKinsey suggests, college and university administrators in the 1940s and 1950s began to solicit help from a new breed of management experts who promised to make order out of the clerical chaos. Reflecting that influence, colleges and universities across the country began to

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[125] Maxfield to Brower, c. 1949, Box 17, Treasurer Records.

[126]Cooper, "Salary Survey – Clerical Employees," Apr. 2, 1952, Box 30, Edens Records.

[127] J.B. Rhine to Markham, June 28, 1940, Box 15, Treasurer Records; "Annual Report for Bureau of Public Information, Apr. 1, 1958- Mar. 31, 1959," report, Box 35, Knight Records.

[128] Cooper, "Operation of the Personnel Department."

emphasize the efficient use of their clerical labor. In speeches, at conferences, and in the newly established journal *College and University Business*, university officers and their business-world counterparts offered suggestions for reforming college bureaucracies in ways that both promised to increase the output of clerical employees and warned of the dangers of their mismanagement. Advocates for these "business methods" bemoaned the fact that few colleges took "full advantage of modern business machines and record systems."[129] College administrators who oversaw successful "centralization and mechanization" projects boasted that they offered an unprecedented opportunity to establish a "uniform procedure [as well as] closer supervision and control," heralding the efficiency supposedly guaranteed by supervision by machine.[130] These increasingly vocal experts promised that their forms, procedures, and business-tested methods would improve the functioning and efficiency of the new knowledge bureaucracies.

Yet, bureaucratic reform advocates rarely acknowledged the personnel consequences of their suggestions. At times, these suggestions had the obvious, and perhaps intended, outcome of deskilling or dividing certain jobs. For instance, Duke's auditing firm suggested that they adopt a certain set of forms in order to free the university from a dangerous dependence on "the vigilance of the bookkeepers," who were, by then, mostly women.[131] But at others, suggestions aimed at efficiency and mechanization revolved around not simply the

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[129] Harold K. Schellenger, Director of Public Relations, Ohio State, "Good Public Relations," *College and University Business* (Aug. 1946).

[130] R.B. Stewart, Controller, Purdue University, "Mechanical Accounting Pays Off," *College and University Business* (Sept. 1946). As early as 1927, some university administrators were talking about the business office as the "vouchering and bookkeeping 'mill.'" These industrial frameworks seem to have grown more common. Minutes of the 17th annual meeting of the association of university and college business officers, c. 1927, Box 1, Brown Papers.

[131] Peat, Marwick, Mitchell & Co, "Audit," 1949, 4, Box 25, Treasurer Records.

use of new technologies to perform existing tasks, but the introduction of new tasks altogether. If the university were required to launch a new hospital registrar or personnel office to create and house complete student or staff records, they would also be required to staff it.[132] One article in an early issue of *College and University Business* described the use of a series of new forms, ledgers, and job orders meant to make more efficient use of the 150 men who made up Purdue University's physical plant department, yet made no mention of the people whose job it would now be to manage that paperwork. Instead, the author personified the forms themselves and credited them with remaking the maintenance department.[133] Duke Hospital administrators similarly celebrated the efficiency brought by the introduction of new technologies like medical records systems and IBM punch systems or payroll machines without acknowledging the new staffing demands those technologies created.

Besides the fiscal demands, the seemingly endless clerical growth also posed challenges more psychic in nature; challenges that Duke's own efforts at formalizing personnel practices sometimes exacerbated. With personnel reform and a renewed focus on the use of business forms, administrators sought to introduce efficiency through order, discipline, routine, and impersonality. But, at the same time, administrators feared, and patients complained about, a "formal" and "cold" sense of "impersonality or institutionalism" infecting the work of clerical employees. In some ways, these feelings reflected a broader postwar-era critique of corporate conformity.[134] Their answer to one aspect of the clerical

[132] Ibid.

[133] Stewart, "Mechanical Accounting."

[134] Porter, "Supt's Corner," *Intercom*, Feb. 1956, 2.

challenge – cost and inefficiency – risked aggravating the other – coldness and commercialism.

The Duke Hospital superintendent summed up in 1959 what many administrators saw as the double-bind of postwar growth, and the importance that came to rest in each individual interaction: "it has changed us from a small, compact institution in which everyone on the staff not only knew but understood the function of everyone else…[While it is] obviously impossible to return to the one big happy family concept of our early years, it is extremely important that every member of the Medical Center staff" be "an ambassador of public relations."[135] Having outgrown the familial, domestic framework previously used to understand the nature of the university community, postwar hospital and college administrators came to adopt, however ambivalently, a focus on what they termed "public relations." This idea held out the possibility that the university's clerical functioning could be at once professional and warm.

Administrators at Duke and other universities grew particularly fixated on the issue of public relations, betraying both the university's increasingly corporate mindset and simultaneous, and related, fears of social illegitimacy. Moreover, in managing the university's reputation in the community, administrators across the country came to believe that the "most effective applications [of public relations] are on the lower levels among lesser employees in daily contact with the public."[136] According to this thinking, it was the women who performed most of the daily work of greeting the public in hospital intake, departmental

[135] Frenzel, "Supt's Corner," *Intercom*, Oct. 1959, 2. Frenzel distinguished between public information campaigns and "public relations [which] cannot be purchased," and for which he held the front-life staff, mostly clerical workers, responsible.

[136] Schellenger, "Good Public Relations."

reception, and telephone operation who were most responsible for Duke's ambivalent reputation within the community.[137] The "Telephone Girl," in particular, came to represent a powerful and dangerous figure, because "in this all-important job the pleasant and helpful operator is a wonderful good-will ambassador for the whole" enterprise.[138] But anxious Duke administrators thought that the etiquette of Duke's employees posed the greatest challenge to its public relations. The supposed rudeness of the university's telephone operators and secretaries became a long-running joke, even in the student newspaper. Nicknamed "the campus' ego deflaters," many an operator would allegedly acted "insulted that she be asked such a question and took no trouble to conceal her irritation."[139] Students and patients thought that an operator should offer "the desired information even if it was not strictly in the limits of her job."[140] Administrators, too, lamented the failure of operators "to exercise a certain amount of common courtesy" and brainstormed ways to remedy the "hostile attitude."[141] Renaming this emotional labor public relations, administrators made it an unpaid responsibility, and yet also a centerpiece, of clerical labor.

Administrators suspected many female clerical workers, not just telephone operators, of succumbing to the spread of unfriendliness that symbolized the cold, bureaucratic postwar world. The hospital employee newsletter ran a series of articles in the early 1950s lambasting the attitudes of employees and urging self-critical reflection. The newsletter editors adapted a

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[137] Ibid.

[138] "Telephone Operators," *Intercom*, Apr. 1960; see also Schellenger, "Good Public Relations."

[139] "Desk Girls Deflate Markham's Ego," *The Duke Chronicle*, Apr. 6, 1945.

[140] Bob Wilson, "Wrong Number," *The Duke Chronicle*, Mar. 11, 1949.

[141] Handwritten note on Duke Endowment to Knight, May 11, 1964, and Dozier to Knight, May 15, 1964, Box 24, Knight Records. Both letters note that this issue had been raised for years.

"10 Commandments" list from the University of Michigan Hospital and reprinted it numerous times, entreating workers to understand that the patient was "not an interruption from your work," that employees were "not doing [them] a favor," and that each patient was "deserving of the most courteous and attentive treatment."[142] In a checklist titled "How do you rate courtesy-wise?" employees were asked to consider how often they evidenced (or did not) a "desire to please," offered a "smile," and demonstrated a "cheerful" demeanor.[143] Taken together, these articles paint an image of a terse and institutional operation lacking the comfort and security associated with domesticity. Even though clerical and telephone staff regularly received approval ratings over ninety-five percent in hospital surveys, administrators still celebrated exceptional employees by noting that they needed "more people with her attitude and friendliness."[144] As administrators expanded the ranks of the University's clerical workforce, they grew ever more doubtful of these women's capacity and willingness to please.

While the new personnel approach sought to introduce order to an unwieldy system, it also promised to upend the personal and social foundations of many work relationships. Some clerical workers drew from those very relationships to imbue what could be boring, mechanical work with meaning or to accrue informal respect and authority beyond what a job description might acknowledge.[145] Moreover, the 1949 study depended on supervisors to determine and evaluate the work of their subordinates, removing a clerical worker's own

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[142] "10 Commandments," *Intercom*, Apr. 1955.

[143] "How Do You Rate Courtesy-Wise?," *Intercom*, June 1955.

[144] "Miss Marva Terry Outstanding Employee," *Intercom*, June 1959.

[145] See discussion of Christine Mimms above.

diagnoses of their labor from the process. And new centralized wage scales sometimes imposed an external cap on clerical worker's advancement. Denied the material benefits that might result from their supervisor's favor but yet required to bestow personal attention and loyalty, the formal wage scale threatened to reveal some clerical staff the emotional exploitation embedded in many of their jobs.

In fact, Duke's female clerical workers responded with ambivalence to pleas to become agents of public relations. The frequency of administrators' complaints certainly suggests an extended period of adjustment, if not resistance, to the formalization of their emotional labor.[146] Like the new standardized wage scale, the framework of public relations retained the emotional demands required of clerical workers while removing the pre-corporate social understanding of that labor. In some cases, clerical workers felt that the new systems obscured and anonymized, but did not actually cure, the irrational nature of authority at Duke.[147] In their responses to these changes, many clerical workers vacillated between viewing the emotional element of their work as both an unjust expectation and what made their job worth doing. Administrators likely combined older familial metaphors with the language of public relations in order to assuage feelings of disorientation among their staff. Still, some clerical workers, especially those who rose through the ranks to become private or department secretaries, adapted and embraced this terminology to position their work as essential, concrete, and central to the functioning of university business.

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[146] See Porter, "Supt's Corner," *Intercom*, June 1955, 2.

[147] "Over Half the Employees of Duke University Are Women," flyer, Nov. 5, 1970, Labor Unions Reference Collection, DU Archives; Karen Brodkin Sacks, *Caring by the Hour: Women, Work, and Organizing at Duke Medical Center* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press), 32-2, 70-88.

Clerical Workers Respond

Faced with increasingly regimented work lives, women who worked in clerical roles at Duke responded in a variety of ways to the period of uncertainty and change they faced after World War II. The rates of staff attrition throughout higher education suggest that many clerical workers approached this job like any other industrial or office job – it was simply a way to make necessary income in the short or long term and might be left without much regret depending on personal circumstances or changing work conditions. These women rarely left a mark on Duke's archive, but nevertheless haunted the minds of administrators who lamented what they viewed as a rejection of institutional loyalty.

Other clerical workers reacted by reimagining the locus of their work's meaning and value, both in their own lives and the overall picture of the university community. On the one hand, some women who worked in clerical jobs at Duke seized the opportunities they saw embedded in the university's growing size and formality. Others celebrated the excitement and social opportunities university life afforded them, embracing an increasingly popular perception of clerical workers as peripatetic and incorrigible flirts. These two visions of the university clerical worker – female professional and young ingenue – were never mutually exclusive, nor did they emerge entirely from among the employees themselves. In some ways, they represented the revival of longer-standing ideas about female office workers from the early twentieth-century commercial world.[148] But whether old or new, organic or imposed, these ideas helped female clerical workers at Duke shape and make sense of the changing world around them.

[148] See Kwolek-Folland, *Engendering Business*, 165-180; Fine, *Souls of the Skyscraper*, 69-75.

By capitalizing upon the new focus on professional standards, some clerical workers at Duke joined with others across the nation in buttressing their claims to authority and remuneration through outside sources of professional recognition.[149] In 1955, Nina Waite passed a rigorous exam to become Durham's first Certified Professional Secretary, bestowed as recognition of her status as a "capable secretary of unquestionable character and integrity."[150] A decades-long employee of Duke, Waite's milestone earned her recognition in the hospital's newsletter. Others joined organizations like the Durham chapter of the National Secretaries Association and the Durham Business and Professional Women's Club, many of which had served similar roles as socio-professional associations for turn-of-the-century white-collar female workers.[151] At least one woman, Kathryn Montague, served as a delegate to the National Secretaries Association Conference. Reproducing the new commercial language espoused by administrators, Montague even won third place for an essay there entitled "Public Relations for the Secretary."[152] Other women, too, cultivated ties with the association, attended its conventions, and otherwise worked to construct a network of socially recognized clerical experts across fields. Duke delegates even invited their peers in the organization to lunch at the university. Such a visit would show Mrs. Doris Parrish's "fellow Chapter members just what a lovely place Duke really is" and also signaled her

[149] For a discussion of the rise of the National Secretaries Association, and professionalization as a strategic response to changes in clerical work, see Turk, "Pink-Collar Aristocracy."

[150] "Nina Waite Honored," *Intercom*, Dec. 1955. See Turk, "Pink-Collar Aristocracy," 97.

[151] For discussion of professional associations among clerical workers in earlier periods, see Maureen Carroll Gilligan, *Female Corporate Culture and the New South: Women in Business Between the World Wars* (New York: Garland Publications, 1999).

[152] "This 'n' That," *Intercom*, Dec. 1955.

belonging to this larger body.[153] Though many of the university's clerical workers could boast formal training even in the interwar period, rarely did they so conscientiously solicit the social reinforcement and respect offered by professional accreditation.

Select female clerical workers also benefited from new, more significant staff hierarchies that were borne of the technological and bureaucratic revolutions on campus. When Helen Kendall was offered the position of Recorder and Secretary for the Faculty of the Divinity School, she was told that she would have secretarial "assistance from the young lady [currently] employed as secretary" and would perform "general supervision" over the work of "a half dozen or more young women employed in the Divinity School."[154] Though largely limited to supervision of other women and dependent upon the formalization of clerical hierarchies, the increasing respect lodged in executive secretary positions over the postwar period represented a significant opportunity for career-oriented, white-collar women. Likewise, she and several other highly placed secretaries, including the secretary to the president, were eventually made TIAA eligible, a benefit previously reserved for faculty and administrators.[155] Reflecting her heightened status, Christine Mimms was greeted with the same post-retirement honors as Ted Minah, the long-serving head of the university's Food Service Department.[156] Though she was ultimately unsuccessful at Duke, Lucile Boyden's efforts to be appointed the Director of Alumni Relations represents a similar determination to leverage her experience and skills into an expanded administrative role that traversed the clerical ghetto. Prying open the slight gaps for advancement that paradoxically resulted from

[153] Doris C. Parrish, National Secretaries Association, to Minah, May 19, 1961, Box 48, Minah Records.

[154] Edens to Helen Kendall, Goucher College, June 2, 1950, Box 8, Edens Records.

[155] Ibid., and Edens to Kimball, c. 1955, Box 8, Edens Records; "University Report," 1971, Mimms Papers.

[156] Clipping (Duke University National Council), 1977, Mimms Papers.

a trend toward specialization and differentiation among clerical staff, these women sought, and received, greater professional recognition of their skills and contributions to the university community.

Some women clericals used dress and demeanor to establish their status as essential members of the professional medical establishment rather than office wives. In 1959, the staff members in the Private Diagnostic Clinic announced they had adopted uniforms consisting of "smart navy suits and monogrammed white blouses."[157] The modest "costumes" projected an "air of business-like good taste" that elevated their professional status and, perhaps, countered the sexually suggestive behavior, and threats, that other scholars found common in offices of the era.[158] Moreover, PDC clerical staff expected one another to maintain the standards which they had collectively set. Despite countervailing pressures to avoid what some administrators and patients derided as "institutionalism," these clerical employees embraced the reputational and occupational opportunities they saw in the trend toward professionalizing university clerical work.

Whereas some emphasized their professionalism, other clerical workers drew on a revived discourse that cast them as glamorous and sociable, at turns adventurous or naïve. In an earlier period, administrators expressed some feelings of discomfort with clerical workers they thought unsuitably youthful, apologizing in advance when one recommended hiring a Miss Moss "even though she is rather young" or offering a position to a Miss Sabine who might otherwise appear "too young."[159] These young women, it was feared, lacked the

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[157] "New Look in Surgical P.D.C." *Intercom,* Dec. 1959.

[158] Ibid. See Julie Berebitsky, *Sex and the Office: A History of Gender, Power, and Desire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

[159] Baldwin to Flowers, Apr. 30, 1941, Box 16, Flowers Records; T.M. to Perkins, Director, Duke Endowment, 1932, Box 8, Flowers Records.

maturity and seriousness required of university work. But in the postwar period, staff publications promoted a youthful, even bordering on frivolous, image of clerical staff. The "For the Birds" section in the hospital employee newsletter purveyed what was likely desired social and interpersonal news but with a patronizing tone.[160] Cartoons in the student newspaper depicted secretaries as young, buxom women dressed in form-fitting attire.[161] The *Duke Chronicle* republished cartoons in the "Little Man on Campus" series by Dick Bibler that presented a revolving set of secretaries as unwitting accomplices to professorial misbehavior.[162] Miss Graves and Miss Mohr were not themselves the focus of the cartoons, instead they served as attractive background accouterments whose naiveté made them pawns in the struggle between faculty and student.

Administrators and supervisors also portrayed secretaries as youthful subjects (or perpetrators) of romantic intrigue. In addition to their daily clerical duties, according to the hospital newsletter, they added "scenic décor to the place."[163] One department introduced a new staff member by announcing, "all you bachelors who have been wondering who our new girl is – form a line to the right."[164] Employee newsletters frequently celebrated relationships between clerical staff members and graduate students, house staff, or other young male professionals on campus. In the same vein, the Dean of the Medical School half-joked, half-decried that the "unmarried students usually married our secretaries, technicians and nurses

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[160] "Strictly for the Birds," *Intercom*, Nov. 1953.

[161] See, for instance, "But he told ME it would leave a scar," cartoon, *The Duke Chronicle*, Nov. 22, 1960, 2.

[162] Dick Bibler, "Little Man on Campus," cartoon, *The Duke Chronicle*, Dec. 11, 1956; *The Duke Chronicle*, Sept. 24, 1957.

[163] "Baker House News," *Intercom*, Apr. 1954.

[164] "This 'n' That," *Intercom*, Aug. 1954.

who are already in short supply," and suggested that they "admit only those students who are [already] married to secretaries, technicians, [or] nurses."[165] Together these comments represented clerical workers as sexually, or at least romantically, active, young women, at once a welcome and attractive addition to the institution and a possible source of temptation and disruption.

While administrators jested about the alleged youth and sexuality of Duke's clerical workers, some female clerical workers themselves also embraced the social aspects of work at Duke – cultivating and maintaining robust connections with one another and with the other professionals in the university community. These relationships built community and social meaning into an increasingly formal work environment. Like many other women in the postwar period, some of the young, white, middle-class women who worked in Duke's clerical ranks longed for domesticity and security after years of global upheaval, even if they also enjoyed the intellectual or financial rewards of wage work in the short term.[166] Others may have felt pressed by loved ones or the prevailing culture to accept the supposed inevitability of the domestic dream. Whatever the reason, women sometimes left work after marrying, a series of events which was celebrated widely among many of their peers in the employee newsletters.[167] Other female clericals returned to Duke years after marrying,

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[165] "President's Report," Apr. 28, 1958, Box 26, Davison Records.

[166] For the complex attitudes towards work and domesticity among middle-class women, see Kathleen Laughlin, *Women's Work and Public Policy: A History of the Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor, 1945-1970* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2000); Jessica Weiss, *To Have and To Hold: Marriage, the Baby Boom, and Social Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); and Susan Hartmann, "Women's Employment and the Domestic Ideal in the Early Cold War Years," in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960,* ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 84-102.

[167] Examples about in *Intercom*, the hospital newsletter. See for example, Miss Gertrude Elliott, "Duke Couple Bound for Honolulu," *Intercom*, Apr. 1954.

choosing, like many women in the postwar period, to combine work and marriage.[168] Though Dean Davison celebrated the fact that "seventy-three percent of [interne's] wives work, or else the Medical Center would be even more inadequately staffed," far fewer wives of doctors like Frances Swett chose to make clerical work at the hospital a lifelong occupation.[169]

Even when not accompanied by an announced departure, weddings between clerical workers and other staffers appear frequently in the newsletters, suggesting a significant level of intimacy and social proximity among professional men and clerical women at Duke.[170] Less generous observers in the administration might frame this familiarity as evidence of frivolity, untamed libido, or even social predation, and some women surely appreciated the opportunities for socializing with the opposite gender that work at Duke afforded them. However, the close relations among clerical and professional staff members speaks also to the ways that postwar changes to the work environment had not eliminated entirely the sense that clerical workers rightfully belonged among the white-collar classes.

Some women appreciated the flexibility, sociability, and respectability of clerical work at Duke. Women who were married to graduate students or attending doctors at Duke, especially those who were college educated themselves, found it useful to secure local work

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[168] See, for example, note on Ruth Georgiade in "This 'n' That," *Intercom*, Apr. 1956 about going part-time to balance her time at home. See Weiss, *To Have and To Hold*.

[169] Davison, report, Apr. 28, 1959, Box 26, Davison Records. This change likely reflected the rising material status of doctors.

[170] See Gertrude Elliott, "McDowell Nurses to Say 'I Do's'" *Intercom*, Feb. 1, 1954, which discusses the marriages of many staff members, not just nurses; see also "This 'n' That" feature of *Intercom* beginning on Aug. 1, 1954. Clerical workers at other universities seem to have experienced similar social mixing. Albright, "A Study of Personnel Practices for College and University Office and Clerical Workers."

that was guaranteed for the length of their stay in Durham.[171] Many office workers built strong connections to some of their peers, vacationing together, socializing outside of work, and frequently returning to share good news or visit with friends even after their departures. For local working-class women like Marva Terry, the job was far superior to the work she had been doing at the tobacco factory while putting herself through commercial school.[172] At Duke, she need not worry about summer layoffs, speedups, or shift work. Office personnel enjoyed what was at the time a relative luxury (even compared with other categories of employees at Duke) of a nine-hour daily work schedule with a regular lunch period.[173] By the 1950s, clerical workers were guaranteed a forty-hour week, one week of Christmas vacation, and a contributory health plan, none of which were granted to service workers.[174] In short, clerical work at Duke remained a comparatively attractive job opportunity in Durham. Still, the massive changes underway during the postwar period did not go unnoticed, and insecurity and disenchantment continued to simmer under the surface.

CONCLUSION: CLERICAL WHITENESS ERODED

College administrators and clerical workers responded to the financial and social challenges they perceived in the 1940s and the 1950s in a number of ways, emphasizing business-tested management methods, lamenting challenges to the gendered order,

[171] Wilburt Davison, "President's Report," Apr. 28, 1958, Box 26, Davison Records; Minah to Miss Alice Burgoin, Manager, Home Economics Cafeteria, Feb. 23, 1959.

[172] "Miss Marva Terry Outstanding Employee," *Intercom,* June 1959.

[173] L.E. Swanson, Assistant Superintendent, to Duke Medical Center Department Heads, July 28, 1959, Box 26, Davison Records; Clarence Whitfield to Walter Cooper, Nov. 21, 1962, Box 42, Jordan Papers.

[174] W.G. Cooper, Nov. 3, 1949, Box 23, Minah Records; Cooper to Department Heads, May 25, 1949, Box 30, Edens Records; "New Health Plan is Important Employee Benefit," *Intercom*, Feb. 1957. In small colleges, office workers tended to work 40-hour weeks, while other auxiliary workers tended to work 48-hour weeks. Clarendon Smith, *A Study of the Development of the Small College Non-Academic Personnel Program.*

embracing professionalization, and realigning clerical work with other symbols of white womanhood. Even as these efforts were underway, a new change upended certain long-established patterns within the clerical workforce and introduced a new cause of tension and uncertainty among clerical workers and between those workers and university management.

In the 1950s, the university hired its first black clerical worker in 1953.[175] Like African Americans across the country, those in Durham had long protested the systematic exclusion of black men and women from jobs.[176] Because Durham also boasted a robust black business environment, black clerical applicants enjoyed a relatively positive employment outlook, at least compared to black clericals elsewhere.[177] Still, they suffered under the racially discriminatory hiring practices of other business, experiencing higher rates of employment than white clerical workers for much of the century. Duke's first black clerical hires seem to have been the initiative of one woman in the medical records library, rather than a conscious policy shift.[178] Perhaps that is why little additional progress had yet been achieved by the early 1960s, when only .8 percent of the university's clerical workforce was black.[179] As civil rights activism in Durham and throughout the nation grained steam, pressure grew on Duke to open more opportunities.[180]

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[175] Theresa Jay Lyons, interviewed by Leslie Brown, Aug. 16, 1995, *Behind the Veil: Documenting African-American Life in the Jim Crow South Collection*, DU Archives. This reluctant move was also happening in for-profit institutions due to public pressure, albeit slowly. Hedstrom, "Automating the Office."

[176] See Greene, *Our Separate Ways*.

[177] See Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham*, 127-9, 133-4, 290.

[178] Lyons interview, *Behind the Veil.*

[179] John Dozier, Business Manager, "Employment Statistics," Apr. 1964, Box 6, Knight Records.

[180] Erik Ludwig, "Closing in on the 'Plantation': Coalition Building and the Role of Black Womens' Grievances in Duke University Labor Disputes, 1965-1968," *Feminist Studies* 25, no. 1 (Spring, 1999), 80.

As clerical jobs opened in the 1950s and early 1960s, many black women welcomed this new opportunity. Theresa Lyons was among the first black women to get a clerical job at Duke; she and about eight other black women began working in the medical record library in 1953. Lyons appreciated that her job at Duke came with "more money…security and…stability."[181] Because they relied on the business of black patrons, who were more likely to be discriminated against and underpaid, Durham's black businesses were run on comparatively smaller budgets and frequently paid lower wages than established white businesses and institutions.[182] Though low compared to other area businesses, Duke's clerical workers still drew salaries that placed them more firmly within the working middle-classes. Moreover, Lyons "had Saturdays and Sundays off," allowing her unprecedented time for leisure and advanced studies when compared to most jobs in Durham.[183] Most importantly, however, Lyons imbibed a sense of pride from her position as a pathbreaker, noting that her job in the library "was probably more prestigious, because at that time people knew that blacks just didn't get jobs like that" at Duke.[184] Others would slowly follow Lyons into Duke's employ, seeking entrée into the steady white-collar jobs in college administration.

Despite these new openings, black women clericals at Duke faced formal and informal obstacles to their acceptance and promotion. Women like Lyons and her peers were hired as file clerks in the new, digitized medical records library. The digitization process had just transformed the nature of work in the department, creating new jobs that revolved around

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[181] Lyons, *Behind the Veil.*

[182] Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham*, 44-5, 91-2.

[183] Ibid.

[184] Ibid.

managing the technology and exacerbating categorical divisions between manual and mental jobs.[185] Duke's decision to assign black women exclusively to these newly created 'de-skilled' positions mirrored previous demographic transformations in the clerical workforce, wherein administrators and employers associated the new sort of employee with labor-saving technological advancements.[186] This pattern continued well into the 1960s, as more and more black women were hired as Data Terminal Operators (DTOs), a new position that entailed sitting at a machine and performing routine data entry and was starkly distinguished from the secretary or stenographer. Though women like DTO Verna Clemons might accept these roles as the "only nice job" available to them, they nevertheless recognized and were frustrated by the obvious signs of racial typing.[187] By naming new black employees "file clerks" and jettisoning them into narrow, newly created positions, administrators likely sought to preempt tensions that might emerge if longer-term white clerical workers came to view new black hires as threats to their relatively privileged position.

If this clerical hierarchy was meant to reassure white clerical workers of their security, it did not prevent many of them from engaging in rituals of racial humiliation. In the medical records library, the department head made Lyons and the other black workers "come to work a half hour early and clean…The janitorial staff had said to us that they couldn't

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[185] Lyons interview, *Behind the Veil*; "Answer to a Fantastic Space Problem," *Intercom*, Feb. 1, 1956.

[186] For history of technological upheavals in clerical work, and their links to demographic changes, see Kwolek-Folland, *Engendering Business*; Davies, *Woman's Place is at the Typewriter*; Strom, *Beyond the Typewriter*; Green, *Race on the Line*; Evelyn Nakano Glenn and Roslyn Feldberg, "Degraded and Deskilled: The Proletarianization of Clerical Work," *Social Problems* 25, no. 1 (Oct. 1977): 52-64. For managers' ideas that computers would solve a host of problems they foresaw with office workers beginning in the 1950s, see Hedstrom, "Automating the Office." While Hedstrom emphasizes the use of attrition to ease the process of automation, Duke explicitly hired new workers to serve as DTOs.

[187] Clemons, quoted in Karen Brodkin Sacks, *Caring by the Hour,* 57. For history of DTO position at Duke, see Sacks, pages 57-71.

understand why she wanted us to come and clean, because that was their job. But she wanted to make sure that we remembered we were black."[188] Though some of their white colleagues were kind and welcoming, others expected them to perform personal or janitorial tasks, like removing the cobwebs from their desk or running personal errands.[189] And, when the hospital hosted its annual summer cook-outs, administrators continued to plan parallel events for white and black employees.

Coded forms of discrimination persisted for decades, especially in the hiring process. One supervisor later defended her failure to hire a black candidate by alleging that they all "lacked what I think is essential for this position…sense of maturity, sound judgment, alertness, and utter discretion." In short, she argued, "this position requires personal skills as well as technical ones," and the candidates presented to her simply could not compete on that measure. [190] Even as they had to fight for opportunities that reflected their skills, black women like Lyons confronted discriminatory treatment that sought to mark them as outsiders in Duke's white-collar world and prevented them from enjoying most of the nonremunerative privileges usually associated with university clerical work.

In some ways, the presence of black women in clerical jobs at Duke introduced a destabilizing element into an already volatile employment picture, marked as it was in the postwar period by predictions of financial and gender disorder. As some contemporaries noted, many clerical jobs had already begun to lose the "features that have traditionally placed it among the middle-class."[191] Over the course of the previous two decades, some

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[188] Lyons interview, *Behind the Veil*.

[189] Ibid.

[190] Paula Phillips to Mr. E.K. Bennett, July 1, 1971, Box 36, Women's College Records, DU Archives.

[191] Glenn and Feldberg, "Degraded and Deskilled," 52.

female clerical workers at Duke had watched as their jobs were stripped of the independence and social recognition that made them desirable in the first place. Though many clerical workers had adapted to these changing conditions by quitting or publicly embracing other parts of the job, the sense of security in their privilege was never fully restored and was, indeed, sometimes further challenged by the university's decision to desegregate the clerical workforce. Those feelings of slowly-eroding prestige would contribute to clerical workers' varied responses to the labor uprisings that transformed campus politics in the 1960s and 1970s.

CHAPTER 4: IN DURHAM, AND OF IT: DUKE AND URBAN GEOGRAPHY, 1925-1965

When Theresa Jan Lyons described the residents of midcentury Walltown, a small black neighborhood in north central Durham, she talked about them in terms of their workplace. "A lot of them did domestic work, the women, and a lot of the men worked at Duke."[1] And what about the Mutual Heights apartment complex on the outskirts of Hayti, the city's largest black neighborhood? "They worked at Duke and at Lincoln and at Watts Hospital."[2] By midcentury, Duke University had clearly made its mark on Durham's landscape. Local residents like Lyons understood that Duke exerted considerable influence on the city's residential geography, mentioning the university in the same breath as other anchor institutions like "American or Liggett-Myers" – the city's tobacco giants.[3]

There were white Duke neighborhoods, too. Trinity Park and Trinity Heights, located immediately to the East and North of East Campus (old Trinity College) and filled with "relatively large apartment houses and single-family dwellings," were long associated with the college whose name they bore. Even as late as 1950, scholars still associated Trinity Park with "personnel and students of the University."[4] Hope Valley launched as a self-described "university and country club community" in 1930 just as the university unveiled its new

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[1] Theresa Jay Lyons, interviewed by Leslie Brown, Aug. 16, 1995, *Behind the Veil: Documenting African-American Life in the Jim Crow South Collection*, DU Archives.

[2] Lyons, *Behind the Veil.*

[3] Lyons, *Behind the Veil*.

[4] Jo Carolyn Lewis, "An Ecological Study of Selected Social Problems in Durham, North Carolina (MA Thesis, Duke University, 1949), 23.

campus.[5] The Duke Forest "suburb" - "known for its fashionable and impeccably maintained houses" - was developed by the university itself with lots sold exclusively to faculty.[6]

As the university grew in size and economic importance, it played an increasingly central role in shaping the city's geography. The university's campus design cultivated an aura of idyllic remove: the wall circling East Campus and the forest surround of West Campus sought to "protect" the University's undergraduates from the world without - from Durham. But Duke could not actually remain aloof from the city at large, not as it grew to employ thousands of people who lived and worked across the town/gown divide. Rather, between 1920 and 1965, the university's employment and land-use policies helped to reorient the geographical distribution of economic and social capital in Durham around the hierarchies, and also the tensions, embedded in the knowledge economy.

Scholars of higher education and urban geography have left stories like those of Walltown and Trinity Park largely unexamined. In one study of "town and gown" relations in North Carolina, Eric Moyen characterized the entire period from 1925 to 1960 as Duke's "retreat into the forest," suggesting at once that Duke and Durham were wholly separate ecosystems and that Duke could successfully remove itself from the latter's orbit.[7] Many foundational works on the history of higher education have rested on the same assumptions.[8]

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[5] *Hill's Durham (Durham County, NC) City Directory* (Richmond: Hill Directory Co., 1930).

[6] Claudia P. Roberts et al., *The Durham Architectural and Historic Inventory* (Durham: City of Durham, 1982), 299.

[7] Eric Anthony Moyen, "Carolina's Campus and Community: The Historical Development of Town and Gown Relations in Twentieth-Century North Carolina," (PhD diss., University of Kentucky, 2004), vi.

[8] See Roger Geiger, *To Advance Knowledge : The Growth of American Research Universities, 1900-1940* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2017); Arthur Cohen and Carrie B. Kisker, *The Shaping of American Higher Education : Emergence and Growth of the Contemporary System* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010); Roger Geiger, *The History of American Higher Education : Learning and Culture from the Founding to World War II* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014); Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University, a History* (Knopf, 1962); John Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education* (Baltimore:

By overlooking the local social and economic contexts in which universities have developed, these historians have promoted an erroneous image of the university as an "ivory tower" standing apart. Historians of class, race, and urban geography have similarly overlooked the role of institutions of higher learning in towns and cities, focusing instead on legal mechanisms of racial exclusion, individual actions and social movements, and realtor associations or urban planning authorities.[9]

Duke University never adopted the "company town" model common in some southern mill communities, but its rise nevertheless profoundly influenced the socioeconomic and spatial character of the city.[10] Compelling recent scholarship has sought to redefine the university as an urban actor, but these works have focused almost exclusively on universities' roles as urban developers and failed to consider their spatial impact as employers.[11] By the

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Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011); Clarence Mohr and Joseph E. Gordon, *Tulane : The Emergence of a Modern University, 1945-1980* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001); Morton and Phyllis Keller, *Making Harvard Modern: The Rise of America's University* (New York : Oxford University Press, 2001).

[9] One important early exception was Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983). For several foundational urban history texts that do not consider the spatial influence of universities, see Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Robert Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Robert Fogelson, *Downtown: Its Rise and Fall, 1880-1950* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

[10] For company town model, see Jacqueline Dowd Hall et al., *Like A Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); and Margaret Crawford, *Building the Workingman's Paradise: The Design of American Company Towns* (New York: Verso, 1995). For a useful bibliography on company towns throughout the Americas see, Olivier Dinius and Angela Vergara, eds., *Company Towns in the Americas: Landscape, Power, and Working-Class Communities* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 211-228.

[11] See Davarian L. Baldwin, "The '800-Pound Gargoyle': The Long History of Higher Education and Urban Development on Chicago's South Side," *American Quarterly; College Park* 67, no. 1 (March 2015): 81-103,277; LaDale Winling, *Building the Ivory Tower : Universities and Metropolitan Development in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018); Margaret Pugh O'Mara, *Cities of Knowledge: Cold War Science and the Search for the Next Silicon Valley* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); and Andrew Simpson, "Making the Medical Metropolis: Academic Medical Centers and Urban Change in Pittsburg and Houston, 1945-2010" (PhD diss., Carnegie Mellon University, 2013). These works are unusual in their breadth, much of the recent interest has focused on the post-1960s urban renewal era.

1950s, thousands of people worked at Duke University and lived in Durham, daily traversing the porous boundary between campus and city. Duke's differential treatment of those employees embedded the knowledge economy's hierarchies into urban space. Even as Duke's presence made the city more middle class, its policies guaranteed that the economic privileges the university promised became concentrated among a relatively small number of its employees.

In contrast, Duke's black employees were not lifted out of the city's working-poor past. Instead, the university embraced the racialized traditions of service labor and actively benefited from the processes of employment discrimination and residential segregation already at play in the city. Their wage and employment policies continuously re-inscribed and reproduced hierarchies of race and class, modernizing the structures of the "Old South" for a new economy. These workers lived and worked tantalizingly close to, and yet entirely apart from, the upwardly mobile professional and clerical classes who came to represent the great promise of the knowledge economy. Thus, the advent of the knowledge economy widened the distance between the haves and the have-nots in Durham in ways that proved ultimately unsustainable. By the mid 1960s, Duke's policies had helped cultivate communities of black Durhamites that were economically beholden to but also, and increasingly, arrayed against the university.

THE NEW SOUTH GETS A NEW UNIVERSITY: DURHAM'S URBAN GEOGRAPHY BEFORE DUKE

Even as Trinity College administrators moved it to Durham in the late 19th century, members of the community remained ambivalent about the impact of city life on the school. The leadership seemed torn over the city's influence. President John Franklin Crowell may have derided the "social poverty" of the country in advocating the move, but he also insisted

on incorporating the area around the college separately from Durham.[12] And in the early 20th century, administrators erected a low stone wall around campus in response to what they saw as discomfiting signs of the city's encroachment.[13] As rumors spread of James Duke's plan for Trinity college, skeptics agonized that "nothing short of a miracle can ever establish a truly great university in a place like Durham."[14] Durham was too dirty, too uncivilized, too busy. Cynics worried that Durham's disadvantages would outweigh whatever other factors might exist to promote the college's development. When James Duke decided that the university's growth should proceed towards the western, unincorporated parts of town in 1924, President Few and others celebrated the seclusion that the "Duke Forest" would offer West Campus.[15]

But, as previous chapters have made clear, the notion that Duke could stay removed from Durham was always unrealistic. If administrators wanted to expand the university, provide for the material comforts of patients and students alike, and free the professorial classes from clerical drudgery, they would have to hire employees to perform that labor. Those employees would have to come from somewhere. And Durham was always going to be that somewhere.

By 1930, when Duke University formally launched, Durham housed over fifty thousand residents, thirty-six percent of whom were black.[16] One scholar that year noted that

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[12] Crowell, quoted in Moyen, "Carolina's Campus and Community," 174.

[13] Moyen, "Carolina's Community," 202.

[14] J.J. Jackson to Few, Nov. 10, 1929, Box 51, William Preston Few Records, Duke University Archives [hereafter DU Archives].

[15] See Robert Durden, *The Launching of Duke University, 1924-1949* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1993). 30-32.

[16] Janiewski, *Sisterhood Denied*, 56

Durham had only a small middle-class.[17] Most residents eked out a living on the meager wages paid in the tobacco and textile industries. And while owners and managers of the tobacco and textile mills still practiced a paternalistic capitalism common in the era, working-class residents were growing impatient with the increasing demands and falling wages of factory life.[18]

Durham's black working-class residents faced overlapping if appreciably more difficult challenges. Though the city was famous for its black middle class, the financial institutions that anchored it recruited their employees almost exclusively "from the skilled class."[19] Discriminatory hiring in tobacco kept Durham's African Americans in the dirtiest and most physically taxing jobs, for which they were paid a fraction of their white counterparts' wages.[20] Only a few all-black mills hired African Americans at all, further shrinking the market for their labor.[21] As a result of these barriers, a significant minority of Durham's black citizens still toiled as domestic servants during Duke's early years, where wages were even lower than in textiles and tobacco. One 1930 study found that domestic service paid a median of $8.00 a week.[22] Given that the same study noted that single women headed almost twenty percent of black working-class households, these low wages

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[17] Hugh Brinton, "The Negro in Durham: A Study of Adjustment to Town Life" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina, 1930), vi-vii.

[18] Janiewski, *Sisterhood Denied,* 121-126.

[19] Brinton, "The Negro in Durham," 187.

[20] Leslie Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham: Gender, Class, and Black Community Development in the Jim Crow South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 44-6.

[21] Kathryn M. Silva, "African American Millhands, the Durham Hosiery Mills, and the Politics of Race and Gender in Durham's Textile Industry, 1903-1920," *North Carolina Historical Review* 94, no. 1 (Jan. 2017).

[22] Brinton, "Negro in Durham," 92.

guaranteed lives of economic insecurity. Like their counterparts in cities in the North and across the growing urban South, black women in early twentieth century Durham rejected household domestic labor and all of its attendant meanings whenever they could.[23] The tobacco factories provided a modicum of hope that such conditions might be avoided, even if that hope remained impossible for most to realize.

By the time of Duke's emergence, Durham had also undergone a series of residential transformations that turned the increasingly rigid lines of class and race into spatial realities. In this processes' general outlines, Durham represented that which was happening in industrial cities across the nation.[24] During the city's late 19th century boom, major business owners often built their stately homes within walking distance of their factories. They and the white-collar managers of their concerns tended to cluster together on the city's high ground. Those neighborhoods were mirrored by small groupings of homes in the hollows below, occupied mostly by African Americans who worked as household staff. Finally, through a variety of different strategies, owners of textile mills and tobacco factories assured their (mostly white) workers housing nearby.[25]

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[23] Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham*, 91-2.

[24] The history of increasing class and race segregation in cities at the turn of the twentieth century is well known. For a very early discussion of this phenomenon in Pittsburg, see, Samuel Hays, "The Changing Political Structure of the City in Industrial America," *Journal of Urban History* 1, no.1 (Nov. 1974): 6-38. For a more recent study of the racial and class dynamics of this process, see Gretchen Boger, "The Meaning of Neighborhood in the Modern City: Baltimore's Residential Segregation Ordinances, 1910-1913," *Journal of Urban History* 35, no. 2 (Jan. 2009): 236-258.

[25] Janiewski, *Sisterhood Denied*, 129.

Over the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the widening gap between classes became more clearly manifested in the city's residential geography. Members of Durham's managerial and capitalist classes began moving out to what was then the exterior of the city, fleeing the increasingly crowded and polluted city center.[26] Cheaply built to begin with, the city's working-class rental housing deteriorated further as absentee owners invested even less in maintaining their properties. Meanwhile, whites began implementing more rigid measures to hem in black residents, leading to further overcrowding in certain segregated neighborhoods. A sociologist studying Durham in the 1930s declared only twelve percent of black dwellings adequate, and only forty-five percent of white dwellings the same.[27] Figure 4.1 shows the areas purportedly occupied by African Americans

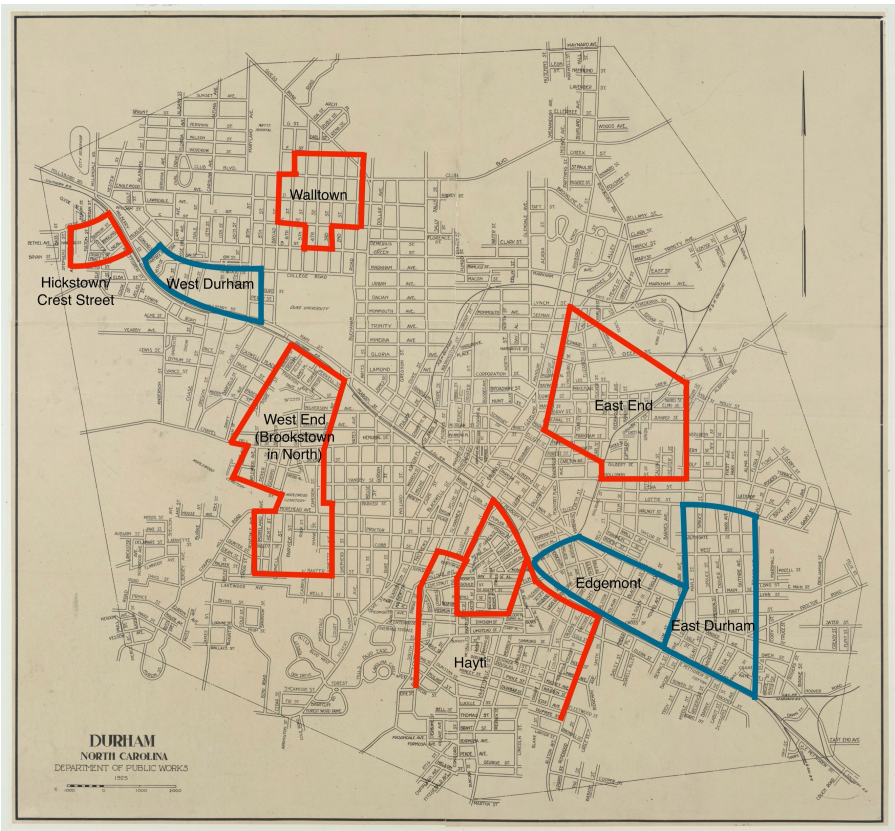

Figure 4.1 Map of Durham with 1915 racial lines. Black neighborhoods marked in red. Poor white neighborhoods marked in blue. Weaver, "Development of the Black Durham Community," 95. Janiewski, Sisterhood Denied.

[26] Garrett Weaver, "Development of the Black Durham Community, 1880-1915" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina, 1987), 23.

[27] Janiewski, *Sisterhood Denied*, 130.

by 1915, and also indicates those areas that were by the 1920s known as the poorest white neighborhoods.[28]

This spatial and economic context was important in shaping how Durhamites responded to the promises of the new university. Duke's administrators built on traditions established under Trinity as well as instituted new policies in an effort to shape the Durham environment to better suit the university's ambitions. At the same time that the university grew, Durham's other industries declined. The city's working-class residents had to adjust to a spatial and economic order now centered around the knowledge economy.

MOVING ON UP: DUKE'S WHITE WORKERS AND WEST DURHAM

In 1949, a "committee of property-holders" rose up to protest the proposed path of the new Durham-Chapel Hill highway. Led by Mrs. Calvin Hoover and William Hamilton, the committee brought their complaints to the city council and to the newspapers, declaring that the "noise and clamor" would "shatter their neighborhood quiet."[29] Though actually part of a mixed gender group of "members of the faculty of Duke University or wives of members," the media coverage was deeply gendered - one headline read that "Women Ask that New Boulevard Not Run Too Close to Homes."[30] But these women's gendered claims were also teeming with symbols of middle-class sanctity and entitlement. The proposed highway "would hurl its traffic" into their domestic idyll, which they had converted with hard work

[28] Weaver, "Development of the Black Durham Community," 95; Janiewski, *Sisterhood Denied*, 130.

[29] Untitled speech, n.d., Box 4, Operations and Maintenance Department Records, DU Archives; "Women Ask that New Boulevard Not Run Too Close to Homes," Durham Sun, Jan. 14, 1949, clipping, Box 4, Operations and Maintenance Records.

[30] Concerned Citizens to Willis Smith, chair of the Board of Trustees, Jan. 20, 1949, Box 4, Operations and Maintenance Records.

and sacrifice from "valueless woodland into some of the finest residential areas in town," a "high-class suburban type" neighborhood.[31]

These property holders were keen to exploit their relationship to Duke, although they noted that their protest was not "connected officially or unofficially with the university."[32] They connected their interests with the university's, arguing that Duke was "one of the great universities of the country" and "a multi-million dollar asset to Durham" which would be undermined were the proposed build to go ahead.[33] The road would "butcher" the campus and "seriously impair one of our major assets, which is our setting."[34] As they narrated the origin story of their neighborhood, they also suggested that Duke had a responsibility to protect them. The university, they argued, had portrayed the area "as a retired site for faculty homes."[35] After selling those faculty "lots in what we thought would always be a relatively retired and desirable section," Hoover argued, the university surely "incurred some moral obligation to" them.[36] In fact, one of the draws of the university - given that "salaries are not high"- was the promise of such affordable building opportunities.[37]

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[31] "Women Ask that New Boulevard Not Run Too Close to Homes," *Durham Sun*, Jan. 14, 1949, clipping, Box 4, Operations and Maintenance Records; Untitled speech, n.d., Box 4, Operations and Maintenance Records; "Women Ask that New Boulevard."

[32] Untitled speech, n.d., Box 4, Operations and Maintenance Records.

[33] Joseph Spengler, speech to committee, n.d., Box 4, Operations and Maintenance Records; "Women Ask that New Boulevard Not Run Too Close to Homes," Durham Sun, Jan. 14, 1949, clipping, Box 4, Operations and Maintenance Records.

[34] Concerned Citizens to Willis Smith, chair of the Board of Trustees, Jan. 20, 1949, Box 4, Operations and Maintenance Records.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Untitled speech, n.d., Box 4, Operations and Maintenance Department Records.

It is not surprising that this "committee of property owners" should associate itself so closely with Duke and even expect the university's aid.[38] Administrators had long displayed profound interest in faculty living arrangements. When Trinity first moved to Durham, the college secured a small plant of 62 acres from local businessman Julian Carr, on which was promptly constructed a "park-like campus of three main buildings" and "seven residences for faculty" (of whom there were seventeen at the time).[39] Other, unmarried faculty sometimes lived in dormitories in order to monitor student behavior.[40]

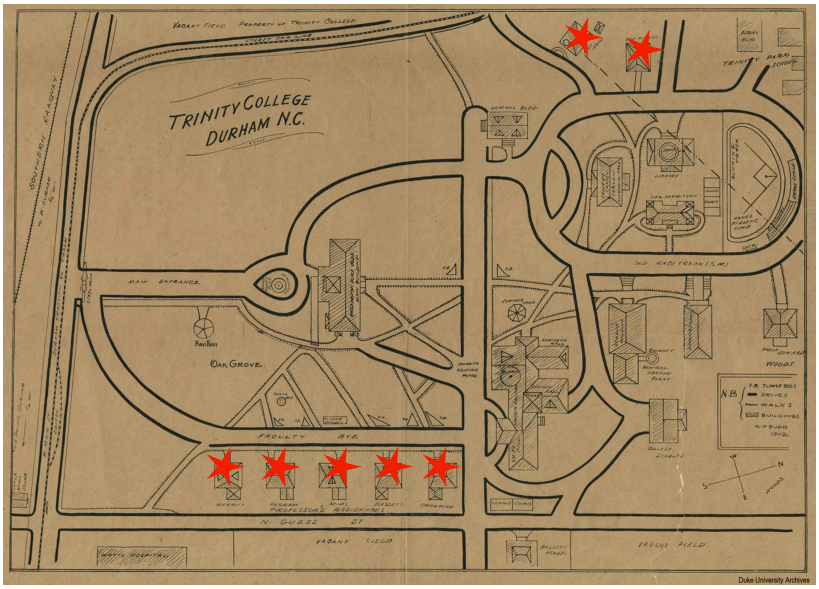

Figure 4.2 Map of Trinity College, c. 1915, with faculty housing marked with red stars.

As the years passed and campus space could no longer fully accommodate the university's growth, faculty began to cluster around Buchanan Boulevard and Watts Street just east of campus. Originally a suburb of Durham proper, this area became known as Trinity Park. In fact, the original "Faculty Row" houses from campus were themselves moved into Trinity Park by 1920.[41] Most of the faculty owned their homes there, though others lived in

[38] Women Ask that New Boulevard Not Run Too Close to Homes," *Durham Sun*, Jan. 14, 1949, clipping, Box 4, Operations and Maintenance Records.

[39] William E. King, *If Gargoyle's Could Talk: Sketches of Duke University* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 1997), 34-5.

[40] Moyen, "Carolina's Campus and Community," 202.

[41] Roberts et al., *The Durham Architectural and Historic Inventory,* 199.

boardinghouses or owned homes in the small offshoot known as Trinity Heights immediately north of campus.[42] Even as the university began its expansion, Trinity Park and Trinity Heights remained primary destinations for faculty housing. Figures 4.3 and 4.4 show this trajectory.[43]

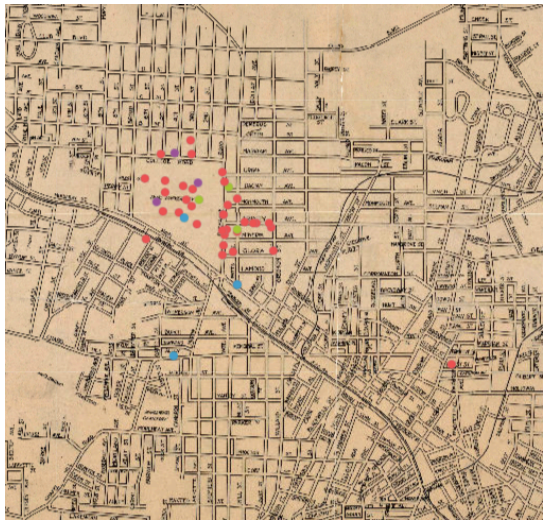

Figure 4.3 Employee residences in 1923. Faculty in red, clerical in blue, maintenance in purple, professional in green.

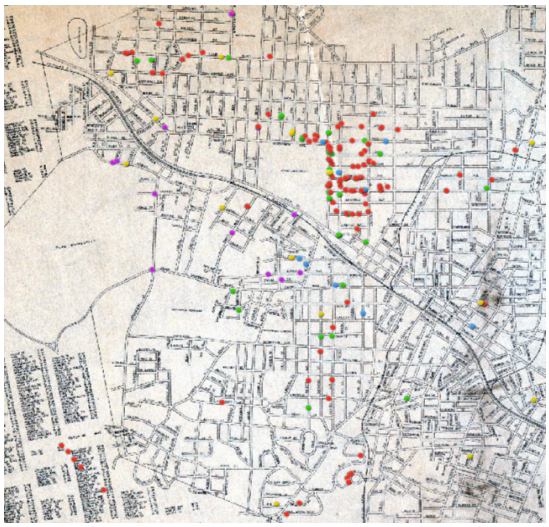

Figure 4.4 Employee residences in 1932. Faculty in red, clerical in blue, maintenance in purple, professional in green.

By the time of the new campus's launch, administrators determined that there was a "shortage of suitable houses in Durham" for the many new faculty recruits.[44] And those new faculty members were putting pressure on the university to help accommodate their arrivals. One early recruit warned then-Vice President Robert Flowers and the Board of Directors that "a well-housed faculty is much more efficient and loyal than one not well housed" and urged them to develop a formal "land-use policy" that included provisions for faculty housing.[45]

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[42] Ibid., 185-187, 199-201.

[43] Locations of residences in this map and the others that follow gathered from City Directories. Information in those directories was imperfect – some names are omitted or data incomplete - but it does offer some valuable insight. *Hill's Durham (Durham County, NC) City Directory* (Richmond: Hill Directory Co., 1923, 1932).

[44] Spengler to Flowers, Apr. 1, 1940, Box 14, Robert Lee Flowers Records, DU Archives.

[45] Ibid.

Concerned with these pressures, university administrators determined to construct a small number of homes on the new west campus and to engage in a more extensive neighborhood development program for others. On the advice of principals from the Duke Endowment, the university set aside $350,000 to build fourteen homes on Campus Drive, including $77,000 for Vice President Flowers' home.[46] Still, these fourteen houses could do little to alleviate the housing concerns of the majority of Duke's professors.

More crucially, Duke forged a policy of selling 'desirable' plots of land surrounding campus at below-market cost to "professors and others closely identified with the University."[47] They also allotted up to $50,000 "for the purpose of putting in streets, sidewalks, sewage and water" in the new neighborhood.[48] Bending the ear of local businessman and State Highway Commissioner John Sprunt Hill, President Few even succeeded in getting the state to pay for paving the access road to West Campus (and thus to these new faculty housing developments).[49]

The first set of lots provided to faculty in this way were located in the neighborhood that became known as Duke Forest - the same neighborhood that would give rise to the "committee of property owners." During the early 1930s, the university began developing the new Pinecrest Road, which would remain a hub of faculty housing for decades. There, with the aid of university financing, faculty and administrators built "finely detailed" homes that appeared to be lifted straight from an architectural magazine.[50] Anderson Street, though not

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[46] Lee, Chief Engineer, "Estimate on Construction of Faculty House No. 2," Box 8, Flowers Records.

[47] Minutes from Meeting with Duke Endowment, c. 1930, Box 7, Flowers Records.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Moyen, "Carolina's Campus and Community," 218.

[50] Roberts et al., *Durham's Architectural and Historic Inventory*, 300.

technically a part of Duke Forest, was developed beginning in the later years of the decade, with curbing and guttering offered with the help of Erwin Cotton Mills and Depression-era "federal appropriation."[51]

At residents' urging, university administrators also helped create what they considered an elegant and suitable neighborhood – in ways that shaped not only the physical environment but the social makeup of the area too. The university's Building Committee set out certain codes for new faculty construction, including lot sizes, limits on number of buildings and the height of fences, setbacks and minimum costs of home construction.[52] But most important to administrators and residents were restrictions on who could live in the neighborhood. Fearing the incursion of bad elements, the Board of Directors allowed the university to make sales to faculty "upon condition" that the deeds "should contain restrictions for the protection of the University against promiscuous conveyances of such lots to third parties," especially "persons of the negro blood."[53] Later, university president Hollis Edens called the first right of refusal a "gentleman's agreement," but the racial covenants were included in the original deeds given to faculty members.[54] And despite the less than formal nature of such a promise, the university proved itself willing to "step in and purchase houses placed on the market, even at some sacrifice, if the essential nature of a faculty

[51] Flowers to Kemp Lewis, Erwin Cotton Mills, Jan. 13, 1939, Box 14, Flowers Records.

[52] Office of the Chief Engineer, Building Committee Minutes, Mar. 11, 1931, Box 8, Flowers Records.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Hollis Edens to President Davis, Apr. 11, 1957, Box 12, A. Hollis Edens Records, DU Archives; B.S. Womble to Flowers, Apr. 6, 1938, Box 14, Flowers Records.

community were being threatened."[55] Faculty and university administrators alike saw the area's racial and class homogeneity as a benefit to the university.

It is unclear when, if at all, the University fully discontinued the policy of selling at below-market rates to faculty. In the 1950s, President Hollis Edens, wrote to the President of Wake Forest of a time when "administrative authorities of the University were inclined toward an extensive program of building," suggesting that such time had passed.[56] Yet, five years later, in correspondence with another university President, Edens noted that Duke's "large holdings of land" allowed it "from time to time" to provide building sites, fully developed with streets and utilities, "at

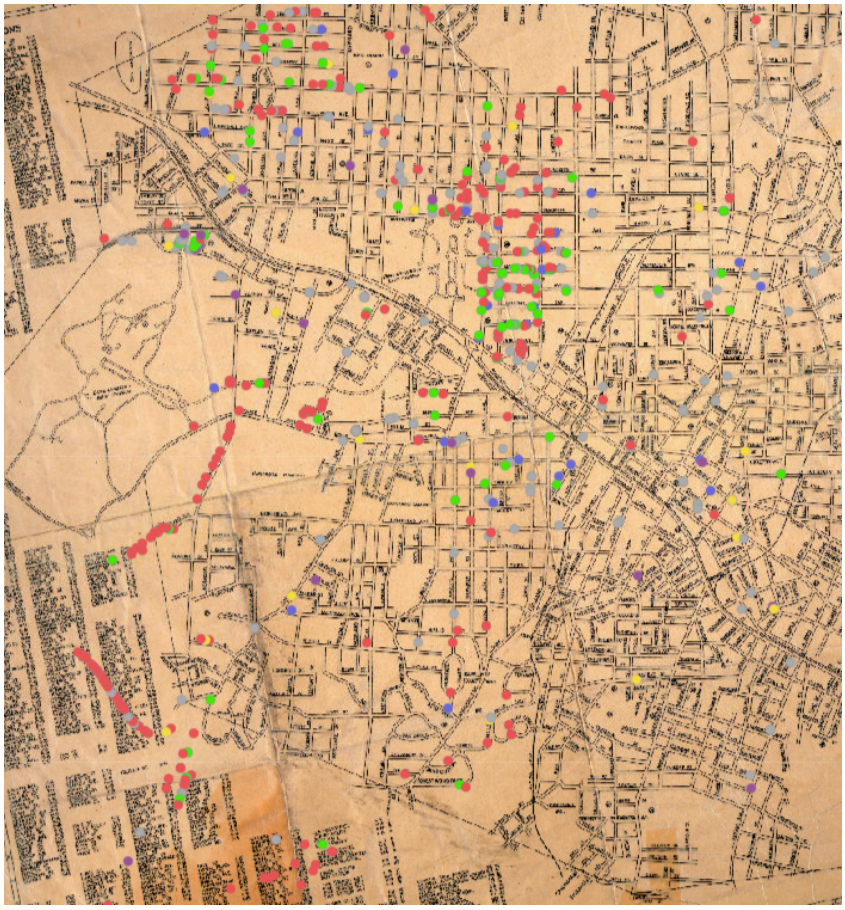

Figure 4.5 White employee residences in 1942. Faculty in red. Duke forest in bottom left hand corner of map.

[55] Edens to Harold Tribble, President, Wake Forest, Sept. 20, 1952, Box 70, Edens Records.

[56] Edens to Tribble, Sept. 20, 1952, Box 70, Edens Records.

a rate lower than the going rate in the City."[57] By the 1960s, thirty percent of faculty still lived in houses on what was then being called "Duke Homesites."[58]

These initiatives set an important precedent, as faculty clearly came to see the administration as an ally in efforts to foster desirable faculty communities near. Economics Professor Joseph Spengler worked for years to develop what he called the "Gattis street project," between Swift Avenue and Gattis about two blocks east of West Campus.[59] Though lamenting the "existence of certain obvious blemishes and shortcomings," by which he almost certainly meant the presence of the black neighborhood Brookstown just to the north, Spengler wrote frequently to Vice President Flowers of the faculty interest in the area, provided that lots were priced below fifteen hundred dollars.[60] This price point, he suggested, was appropriate for the "middle income group" about which he was primarily concerned, and would have the added benefit of convincing some number of faculty to resist the "lure" of Hope Valley and remain "near campus."[61] He especially wanted the university to induce the city "to make the legal maximum contribution toward the development of this project in view of the fact that the city will be reimbursed in taxes."[62]

Ultimately, Spengler decided that the "unsightly surrounding areas" on Gattis Street were simply too problematic to accept. Instead, he suggested that they open another project

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[57] Edens to Davis, Apr. 11, 1957, Box 12, Edens Records.

[58] Reed Kramer, "The Durham Housing Problem and Duke University: A Two-Part Survey," (honors thesis, Duke University, 1969), 16.

[59] Spengler to Flowers, Apr. 1, 1940, Box 14, Flowers Records.

[60] Spengler to Flowers, Dec. 19, 1939, Box 14, Flowers Records.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Spengler to Flowers, Apr. 1, 1940, Box 14, Flowers Records.

closer to the Pinecrest development. He assured Flowers that he knew personally of sixteen families willing to purchase immediately. Finally, aligning his own housing interests with university administrators' aims, Spengler assured Flowers that he spoke out of interest "not only in the immediate housing situation but also in the development of Duke as the Harvard of the South."[63] For Spengler, one key to that ambition was a well-housed faculty and a well-insulated campus. Over the 1930s and 1940s, more than one hundred homes were built in the Duke Forest development along Pinecrest, Anderson, and Cranford.[64]

Despite Spengler's best efforts, many faculty were indeed drawn to the new, all-white "country club and university community" Hope Valley on the outskirts of Durham.[65] Vice President Flowers even purchased several plots of land there as an investment opportunity.[66] New faculty and administrative recruits often felt encouraged by the proximity to colleagues and drawn to the "comparatively tax free" neighborhood (though receiving city services, Hope Valley was not then part of Durham proper).[67] The neighborhood's developer, Robert J. Mebane, anticipated that the faculty and doctors of the relaunched university would make up the bulk of his clientele.[68] Duke faculty did not disappoint him, accounting for more than half of the homes constructed in the 1930s.[69] In a testament to the predominance of Duke

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[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Hoyt Boone, Hope Valley, to Flowers, c. 1930, Box 7, Flowers Records.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Spengler to Flowers, Dec. 19, 1939, Box 14, Flowers Records.

[68] Roberts et al., *Durham's Architectural and Historical Inventory*, 291.

[69] Comparison between Roberts et al., *Durham's Architectural and Historical Inventory*, 292, and data from *Hill's Durham (Durham County, NC) City Directory* (Richmond: Hill Directory Co., 1932, 1935, 1938).

faculty in Hope Valley, the Country Club's rules and regulations explicitly delineated the policies for "student non-members" invited to the facility.[70]

Hope Valley's exclusivity provided its draw from the beginning. Announcing its launch in an ad in the Durham Morning Herald in 1926, the developers promised that it would be "sensibly restricted – completely serviced" and "protected forever from encroachment by undesirable elements."[71] A later advertisement was particularly telling: "Those children of yours! […] Where will they play? […] And their playmates! Who will be their companions – just anybody and everybody or youngsters of promise, talent, and leadership?"[72] While almost certainly including poor and working-class whites among this riff-raff, the Hope Valley developers and residents had one particular group in mind. Each deed was affixed with a covenant that prohibited the home from being "occupied by negroes or persons with negro blood; provided that this shall not be construed to prevent the living upon the premises of any negro servant whose time is employed for domestic purposes."[73] By 1938, at least twenty-eight Duke faculty, administrators, and managers had built in this racially-segregated and class protected neighborhood and many more joined the country club organized there.[74]

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[70] Hope Valley Country Club, "Rules and Regulations," pamphlet, June 28, 1932, Box 8, Flowers Records.

[71] Mebane & Sharpe Inc., "Hope Valley Marketplace – An Original Conception," advertisement, Durham Morning Herald, 1926, reproduced by *Open Durham* (Durham: Preservation Durham, 2011), http://www.opendurham.org/category/neighborhood/hope-valley.

[72] Mebane & Sharpe, Inc., "Where Will They Play?," advertisement, c. 1927, *Open Durham*.

[73] Hope Valley deed, Dr. W.R. Stanford, 1926, reproduced in *Uneven Ground: The History of Housing and Land Inequality in Durham, NC* (Durham: BullCity150, digital exhibit), https://www.bullcity150.org/uneven_ground/invisible_walls/deed_restrictions/.

[74] *Hill's Durham (Durham County, NC) City Directory* (Richmond: Hill Directory Co., 1938); "Roster of Hope Valley Country Club," 1938, Box 41, Flowers Records. For the symbolic importance of Hope Valley to later social justice activism in Durham and on campus, see Erik Ludwig, "Closing in on the 'Plantation': Coalition Building and the Role of Black Women's Grievances in Duke University Labor Disputes, 1965-1968," *Feminist*

Other Durham residents quickly came to associate enclaves like Hope Valley and Duke Forest both with the university and with upper-class entitlement. When one doctor employed at Duke who had recently moved to Hope Valley protested notices from the County Tax Supervisor, that office fired back that they "had numerous complaints from tax-payers" about the faculty of Duke's Hospital and University hiding their assets. He vowed to make "a complete check up on every employee in the hospital and Duke University to see that they pay their taxes along with all other good citizens."[75] Whether or not members of Duke's professional class were, indeed, evading their tax responsibilities, this episode reveals the distrust with which many citizens of Durham had come to view that new cadre's relationship with the community. Together, these construction projects created new loci of middle-class and professional culture and authority in the city, defined by their relationship to the university and sharply restricted by race and class.

Though faculty and medical doctors remained the most touted recruits to the new university, they were well outnumbered by non-instructional staff members hired to do the daily administrative labors of a large institution. In fact, Duke's growth in the middle 20th century introduced and expanded opportunities for white-collar and professional workers, helping guide Durham's transformation from a model working-class city of the 'New South' to a representative of the post-industrial knowledge economy. To fill these roles, administrators began to draw from local Durham residents as well as transplants with pre-existing connections to the university. The stories of some of these employees - how they came to work at Duke and came to see their relationship to the work they performed at the

Studies 25, no. 1 (1999): 79–94.

[75] County Tax Supervisor to Dr. Bayard Carter, Feb. 10, 1934, Box 8, Flowers Records.

university - was explored in chapter three of this dissertation. The university hired only white candidates for clerical, professional, and technical positions until the 1950s, and, while many were initially connected to the university through other family members, they came from a variety of middle- and working-class backgrounds. However, several patterns emerged that significantly shaped both the local socio-spatial environment and the experience of laboring at Duke and, as such, are worthy of note here.

Though the university had neither the space nor the funds to construct detached homes for its faculty, administrators did see fit to build a large apartment building on East to house some recruits. Named the Faculty Apartments, this building was constructed on the main quadrangle and completed in 1927. And though housed at what was then the Women's College and called the Faculty Apartments, the building housed a range of tenants, including men and women who served in professional, clerical, and faculty positions.[76]

While most of the professional and clerical employees did not qualify for this generous treatment, the university leadership often did make more concerted efforts to fulfill their housing needs. Most importantly, administrators encouraged and even partnered with private citizens to build racially segregated apartment facilities and residential developments nearby the university explicitly for the purpose of housing the university's staff. Beginning in at least 1935, Duke administrators like Flowers sought to work with private developers to make use of New Deal-era funds. Writing to Flowers on behalf of a client who wanted to construct two buildings for the people "working in the offices of the University," W.T. Penergraph noted that the client felt "that the apartments would greatly improve this street, which is so close to the university." Furthermore, they would be willing to "place the street

[76] *Hill's Durham (Durham County, NC) City Directory* (Richmond: Hill Directory Co., 1929, 1932, 1935).

according to the University needs" if Flowers would see fit to support their application to rezone the area.[77] Flowers wrote directly to Judge Sykes, who was in charge of the rezoning application, in support of the application, calling it to the "advantage of the city and of Duke University."[78]

Later that year, Flowers wrote to the director of the Federal Housing Authority's Low-Cost Housing Division to advocate for another private apartment construction plan for "employees and graduate students." The university was not inclined to do any more construction itself, but Flowers wanted to express its hearty support of the proposed project. He additionally pledged that "necessary additional land can be made available" for the project from the university's holdings were the FHA to approve a low-cost loan for the developer.[79] In 1940 Flowers wrote to the State Director of the FHA, Aubrey McCabe to inquire as to the latter's objection to another project in development. The university, he explained, did not think it "wise" to sell any of their "large area of land." But "in order to get living accommodations for the large number of people employed at the University" and especially "the people who are connected to the Hospital," they were interested in helping "development to be made in the areas in close proximity." Flowers reassured McCabe that the location "would be very desirable" and a great "benefit" to the university, and urged McCabe to reconsider his objection.[80] Though it is not certain that either of these projects were ever fully realized, they suggest a strong and concerted interest in assisting the private

[77] W.T. Pendergraph to Few, May 14, 1935, Box 8, Flowers Records.

[78] Flowers to Judge Sykes, May 21, 1935, Box 8, Flowers Records.

[79] Flowers to Miles Colean, Director, Low-Cost Housing Division, Federal Housing Authority, Sept. 21, 1935, Box 8, Flowers Records.

[80] Flowers to Mr. Aubrey McCabe, State Director, Federal Housing Authority, Apr. 10, 1940, Box 14, Flowers Records.

development of housing nearby. Flowers and others in the administration believed that these projects provided a dual benefit to campus - they served as a buffer zone, guaranteeing the university would be surrounded by racially and economically secure neighborhoods, while also offering desirable housing options for some of its employees.[81]

If those three projects never reached fruition, but two others proved more successful. In 1937, the privately-owned University Housing Corporation began construction of a 112-room project on the corner of Duke University road and Swift Avenue, just three blocks from the entrance to West campus.[82] Though students who received dispensation could also live in the University Apartments, it was intended and operated largely as a complex for the professional and clerical staff of the university. Long-time clerical worker Nina Waite lived there with one of her sisters for many years. Nina Waite's sister, Margaret, who worked for a time as a clerical worker at Duke but later moved on to work for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, continued to live in an apartment down the hall from Nina.[83] Other residents in the late 1930s and early 1940s included physicians, technicians, clerical workers, and faculty.[84] Though the facility was not exclusively a 'Duke' complex, it served as another center of professional-class culture in the university's orbit – a culture populated by a cross section of white employees at Duke.

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[81] Charles Huestis to Blackburn, Chancellor, July 7, 1972, Box 10, Vice President of Business and Finance Records [VP Records], DU Archive. Other universities undertook similar projects to insulate themselves from surroundings deemed undesirable. See Winling, *Building the Ivory Tower*; Baldwin, "The '800-Pound Gargoyle'"; Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*.

[82] "University Apartments," advertisement, *Duke Alumni Register*, July 1938.

[83] "Miss Medical Center Personality of 1958," *Intercom*, June 1958.

[84] *Hill's Durham (Durham County, NC) City Directory* (Richmond: Hill Directory Co., 1935, 1938, 1942, 1946).

The owners of the Poplar Apartments, located at the otherwise undeveloped northwest corner of West Campus, struck an even closer relationship with Duke, revealing the university's abiding interest in ensuring adequate housing for their white nonacademic employees. The university gave the land to a private developer in the early 1950s, with the intention that the units would provide "convenient and affordable housing" primarily for hospital and medical school employees.[85] Only a year after the hospital had opened, Dean Dr. Wilbur Davison began to agitate for such accommodations, arguing that "he could run the hospital at much less expense" if the nurses and clerical personnel lived nearby.[86] Though the apartment complex, which grew to include several hundred apartments, remained in private ownership, university personnel continued to cooperate with Edwin in his management of the facilities, often reviewing his proposals for expansion and pricing.[87] Here, too, Duke's white professional, clerical, and supervisory workers lived alongside other white-collar professionals employed in the city's growing financial concerns.[88] One wife of a Duke medical resident remembered that "99% of the tenants were Duke" families as late as 1957.[89]

As was the case with Duke Forest and Hope Valley, residents, administrators, and property owners envisioned this university-supported housing as a racial oasis. As federal non-discrimination policies came into effect in the 1960s, the concerned owner of Poplar turned to then-President Edens for reassurance. He noted that the apartments could not

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[85] Jean Bradley Anderson, *Durham County: A History of Durham County, North Carolina* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 337.

[86] Flowers to Colonel John Bruton, Chairman, Board of Directors, Aug. 11, 1931, Box 8, Flowers Records.

[87] Henricksen to Edens, Jan. 6, 1960, Box 42, Edens Records.

[88] *Hill's Durham (Durham County, NC) City Directory* (Richmond: Hill Directory Co., 1935, 1938, 1942, 1946, 1949).

[89] Anonymous, "Poplar Apartments," *Open Durham*, http://www.opendurham.org/buildings/poplar-apartments.

expand as the university and he both desired "as long as the F.H.A. requirements are in effect," singling out the non-discrimination clause as the federal agency's "objectional requirement." The manager of the property, he noted, had "been clever in avoiding this issue" but he feared what would happen with greater enforcement.[90] Within days, Edens wrote back to reassure the owner. "With reference to the sensitive problem about which we talked," he said, "I do not hold a pessimistic view." He urged the owner to trust that "the local, close-knit feelings of the residents will control that."[91] Though no records reveal when the complex was finally desegregated, black "nurse employees" Rosa Steel and Mary Pitts complained of racial discrimination by the manager in 1968. Vice President of Business and Finance Charles Huestis made sure to note that he did "not concur on their opinion," distancing the university from any responsibility in the situation.[92]

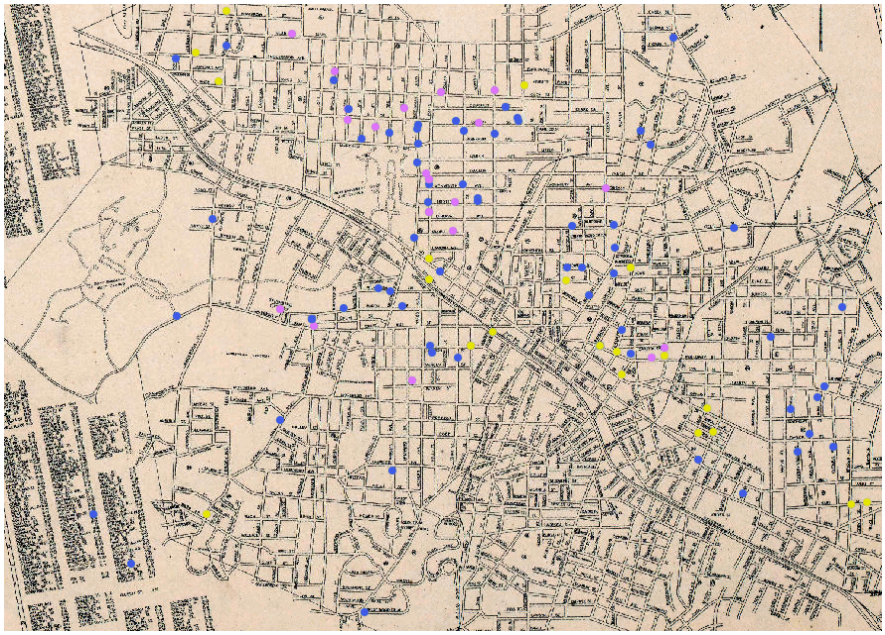

Figure 4.6 Residences of white clerical, library, and service supervisor employees, 1949. Clerical in blue, library in purple, Service in yellow.

Of course, the majority of the university's clerical and technical workers did not live in any one of these apartment complexes. These employees remained spread out across the

[90] Edwin to Edens, May 23, 1956, Box 47, Edens Records.

[91] Edens to Edwin, May 26, 1956, Box 47, Edens Records.

[92] Huestis to Mr. Jim Smeltzer, Duke Hospital, June 17, 1968, Box 5, VP Records.

city, though many clustered in the Trinity Heights/Park neighborhoods. But taken together, these efforts on the part of the university had successfully surrounded Duke's campus with "respectable," usually Duke-connected white-collar Durhamites. [Figure 4.6][93] The university's policies both promoted the growth of a white-collar (and white) middle-class, and shifted the core of that capital toward the western edges of the city.

These policies also had important implications for how many faculty, clerical, and other professional staff developed workplace-centered communities and came to understand their status in Durham vis-à-vis their work at Duke. As the protests of the "concerned citizens" in 1949 make clear, the university's efforts to promote some faculty's housing interests imbued them with a sense of entitlement. For some clerical workers, Duke's housing policies encouraged them to see service at Duke as a marker of middle-class status. Many others did not or could not use the housing resources that the university helped develop. Nevertheless, they benefited from higher wages and the racial privileges of mobility compared to the university's black service workers.[94]

	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955	1960	1965	1969
Service Wages	480-500	465-610	500-780		750-1300	800-1400	950-1670	1280-2340	2560-5632
Clerical Wages	720-2100	720-1800	780-2400	1080 min	1380-3600		1920-3600	3016-5628	4076-8736

Figure 4.7 Table with comparative wages.[95]

[93] Data is from city directories. Information is incomplete, as some employees were overlooked, and many employees gave insufficiently detailed description of their position with the university.

[94] See chapter 3.

[95] Salaries and rents in yearly sums. 1928 rent from Alfred Hoffman, "Durham Makes a Survey," *American Federationist*, Apr. 1928, 424-427; 1930 rents from Brinton, "Negro in Durham," 236; 1960 estimate from Henricksen to Edens, Jan. 6, 1960, Box 42, Edens Records; 1965 estimated rent from "Neighborhood Improvement Club," United Organizations for Community Improvement (UOCI) Neighborhood Councils and Organizers, Folder 4579, North Carolina Fund Records, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina.

"Through the Wilderness": Black Workers and Their Neighborhoods

As described in chapter two, Duke administrators hired a cadre of local African-American men and women to perform the reproductive labors necessary to support a large residential university and medical facility. Unlike with faculty members and, to a lesser extent, clerical and professional workers, administrators paid little heed to the housing needs of this sector of their workforce. But as Theresa Lyons' testimony made clear, Durham residents could readily identify the university's imprint on black neighborhoods. By midcentury, the university's recruitment patterns and low wages had made residential conditions harder for Durham's poor and working-class African Americans. These policies, combined with the university's willingness to benefit from the city's segregated residential landscape, helped to create black 'Duke neighborhoods' that were the mirror image of places like Duke Forest or Trinity Park.

Family employment chains partially explain the clustering of Duke employees in certain neighborhoods. In general, early Duke administrators outsourced the process of hiring, operationalizing existing kin and community networks in Durham's black community. One of the first service employees to work at Duke Hospital, Donald Love, got his job there through his father, who worked as a multilith operator at the college.[96] George Frank Wall followed his father George into service at Duke.[97] Four members of the Boulware family worked side by side at the university for more than two decades.[98] Though families did not

[96] Donald Love, "40-Year Employee Remembers When…" *The Intercom*, Nov. 18, 1970, 10.

[97] "Negro Kitchen Employee Bequeaths Sum to Duke," *Durham Morning Herald*, n.d., clipping, Box 48, Theodore Minah Records, DU Archives.

[98] *Hill's Durham (Durham County, NC) City Directory* (Richmond: Hill Directory Co., 1929, 1932, 1935, 1938, 1942, 1946).

always stay at Duke for so long, the presence of large, loosely-connected extended kin networks was not uncommon. When Arthur Leonard Brodie moved to Durham from the country and went to work at Duke Hospital, he met a lot of employees there with his mother's maiden name.[99] Even as late as the 1960s, these hiring strategies were still in use. When George Scarborough Jr. got married a second time, he "got [his wife] a job at Duke and her two boys and her brother a job at Duke," all in the housekeeping department.[100]

Sometimes, word-of-mouth recruiting worked in a more ambiguous way. One woman remembered understanding that as the university and medical center grew, work could be found there. But she also knew what kind of work that was - "no Black nurses" could work at Duke, but there were "Black cleaners, I guess, janitorial people in the dormitories, as well as in the hospital."[101] Likewise, Arthur Leonard Brodie remembered that male students at the North Carolina College for Negroes [later renamed North Carolina Central] in the first half of the century knew that there were few ways to earn money while at school in Durham "unless some of them worked at Duke Hospital, as they did, as orderlies or something."[102] The uniforms that service employees were required to wear sometimes turned employees into walking advertisements for Duke. Scarborough returned to the university after he ran into a man with a "Duke University housekeeper uniform with a patch on it" and inquired about

[99] Arthur Leonard Brodie, interviewed by Chris Stewart, May 28, 1993, *Behind the Veil*.

[100] George Scarborough, Jr., interviewed by Chris Stewart, Kara Miles, and Rhonda Mawhood, May 27, 1993, *Behind the Veil*.

[101] Quoted in June Phyllis Murray, "African-American Family Experiences as Affected by a Changing Economy Across Four Generations in Durham, North Carolina" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina Berkeley, 1991).

[102] Howard Monroe Fitts, Jr., interviewed by Paul Ortiz, June 8, 1994, *Behind the Veil*.

openings.[103] Whatever the particulars, many employees narrate their story of going to work there with a familiar refrain - "word was out that they were hiring at Duke."[104]

Many administrators and faculty seemed to see housekeeping work on campus as an extension of the relations of service labor in the broader community, as Chapter 2 discussed. This is likely also why administrators seemed comfortable with the proximity of small black neighborhoods to Duke's campus. When asked why Durham business people never sought to develop some of the areas surrounding campus, longtime Director of Operations W.E. Whitford replied that there was no open property because "they had the Negro section right close to it to have their help."[105] Though Durham was a racially segregated city by the 1930s, white southerners still often expected black household workers to live *somewhere* nearby. The presence of a black neighborhoods bordering campus was also conditioned by necessity. Like many other poor and working-class Americans, the maids working at Duke for fifty-five cents per hour were unlikely to be able to afford cars and some employees remembered that they "didn't have ten cents to ride the bus with."[106] If Duke was going to employ these women to perform the labor required of a community of students and patients and pay them so little, most of them were going to have to live within walking distance of campus. These precise circumstances propelled the growth and development of three small black neighborhoods in West Durham: Walltown, Hickstown/Crest Street, and Brookstown.

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[103] Scarborough interview.

[104] Ibid.

[105] William Edward Whitford, interviewed by Charles Huestis, Stephen Harward, and Diana Gresham, 1981, DU Archives.

[106] Scarborough interview.

Figure 4.8 Black employee residences, 1935.

Walltown was the earliest black neighborhood to become closely associated with Trinity College/Duke University. It originated as part of the large speculative parcel owned by the Durham Consolidated Land and Improvement Company, as had the future Trinity Heights. But whereas the better land of the Heights quickly sold to professors at the new Trinity College at the turn of the century, Walltown was "crisscrossed with deep gullies and several of its blocks traversed by a wide brook."[107] A geographic and architectural study of Durham in 1980 noted that the 900 and 1000 blocks of 3rd (Onslow) and 4th (Berkeley) were developed at the same time as Trinity Heights directly to the south, in the early 1900s. Yet, while that study noted Trinity Heights' association with the college, the author did not emphasize the same with Walltown.

In fact, Walltown was created by precisely the same forces that led to Trinity Heights' development. As the college expanded, it moved away from housing faculty and staff on its grounds. One janitor, George Wall, had famously moved with the college to Durham from

[107] Roberts et al., *Durham's Architectural and Historic Survey*, 193.

Randolph county.[108] Now, he had to "have a place to live."[109] Another resident of Walltown and employee of Duke, Donald Love, later described Wall's journey for the local black paper.

> "Naturally, he wanted to live as near his work as possible. He went north of Trinity College, entered this forest, picked a place, and said to himself, 'This is it.' …He collected material from Trinity College, such as boxes, scrap lumber, anything he could find useful to build quarters for his family. As he worked building his castle, he beat a path through this forest from Trinity College."[110]

One of George Wall's descendants later recalled that 3rd Street itself "grew from a path which the original George Wall made through the wilderness to the Trinity College campus in order to get back and forth from his job."[111] Love's description of Walltown's past emphasizes its connection to the College beyond George Wall as well. Among the first families, "the Pattersons, Haskins, Canidies, Basses, two sets of Davises, two of Hopkins, Rogers, Love, Hookers," most were employees of Duke.[112] Growing up in in the 1920s, the children of Walltown understood that connection, with Love remembering that "our relatives, such as fathers, uncles and friends worked in dormitories, classrooms, and the gyms."[113] Thus, in the early twentieth century, Walltown was as much a Trinity neighborhood as were those which took the college's name.

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[108] For discussion of the story of George and Frank Wall, see Chapter 2.

[109] "Dr. John Franklin Crowell Pays Tribute to George Wall," *Duke Alumni Register*, Apr. 1930; Donald Love, "Walltown," *The Carolina Times*, June 2, 1973, 8A.

[110] Ibid.

[111] "Descendants of Local Community's Namesake Hold Family Reunion," *The Carolina Times*, Aug. 18, 1962, 10.

[112] Love, "Walltown."

[113] Ibid.

As Walltown developed, the neighborhood lost its singular association with the college but not its working-class character. As in many of Durham's poorer black neighborhoods, most of the roads in Walltown remained unpaved into the 1950s. Resident Jennifer Smith-Wyatt remembered that "everybody in Walltown, compared with today's standards, was considered poor" but that "there were degrees of poor." Some owned small homes, whereas others rented their homes and had a discernably lower standard of living. [114] Sociologists, realtors, and newspaper reporters variously described Walltown as "poor and isolated," "mostly of lower class," and "working-class."[115] In the 1910s and 1920s, as black residents began streaming into Durham to work in the tobacco factories, developers quickly bought up more parcels from the Durham Consolidated Land and Improvement Company and erected rows of duplexes there to house the incoming workers.[116] One survey in 1918 suggested that the large majority of residents of Walltown and Hickstown, another black West Durham neighborhood, worked in factories and mills. [117] Still, while Walltown became home to other members of Durham's black working-class, Duke's presence as an employer remained pronounced.

But, if Walltown and Trinity Park emerged from the same historical processes, the New Deal-era Homeowner Loan Corporation's (HOLC) Durham map stands as an enduring testament to the divergent outcomes those processes would have for black and white Duke

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[114] Jennifer Smith-Wyatt, interviewed by Barbara Lou and Brandon Dorsey, Oct. 4, 2003, *Durham Civil Rights Heritage Project,* Durham County Public Library.

[115] Heather Deutsch, "Walltown: A History of a Neighborhood and a Housing Renovation Program" (master's thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2004), 10; Leon Powell, Realtor, "Area Description – D-1," May 25, 1937, reproduced in *Uneven Ground*, https://tim-maps.carto.com/viz/1dcfb49e-3d4b-11e5-82af-0e4fddd5de28/embed_map; Roberts et al., *Durham Architectural and Historic Survey*, 194.

[116] Roberts et al., *Durham Architectural and Historic Survey*, 193-4

[117] Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham*, 232.

employees. Historians have convincingly established the discriminatory nature of the red-lined HOLC maps, which rated different cities' neighborhoods for the purposes of federally-backed mortgage lending. Because they were used as lending guides by federal and private mortgage lenders for decades, they had an outsized effect on people's ability to build real estate equity.[118]

Like all other predominantly black neighborhoods in Durham in the late 1930s, the HOLC gave Walltown a 'D' grade, effectively foreclosing the possibility of its residents qualifying for lending assistance.[119] About Trinity Park, Walltown's mirror development, Powell was far more generous. Listed as "college professors, professional, business executives," the residents there were touted as good investments. Moreover, the proximity to Duke was expressly "considered in [the neighborhood's] favor."[120] The new neighborhoods that Duke was developing on the eastern boundaries of its new West Campus were described even more favorably. The proximity of one 'A' neighborhood to university was listed as a "favorable influence," and its residents' income was estimated at $10,000 to $25,000 – a full twenty-five times that of Walltown.[121] The HOLC maps solidified white faculty members'

[118] There is a robust literature that highlights the impact of the HOLC policies on racist lending practices and segregation. For a foundational text, see Kenneth Jackson, "Race, Ethnicity, and Real Estate Appraisal: The Home Owners Loan Corporation and the Federal Housing Administration," *Journal of Urban History* 6, no. 4 (August 1980): 419-452. For several examples of their application in particular cities, see Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 33-56; and Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*, 212-75. For recent debates on the extent of HOLC's impact in particular and the mechanisms of that influence, see Todd Michney and LaDale Winling, "New Perspectives on New Deal Housing Policy: Explicating and Mapping HOLC Loans to African Americans," *Journal of Urban History* 46, no. 1 (2020): 150- 180; Amy Hillier, "Redlining and the Home Owners' Loan Corporation," *Journal of Urban History* 29, no. 4 (May 2003): 394-420; and Louis Lee Woods, II, "The Federal Home Loan Bank Board, Redlining, and the National Proliferation of Racial Lending Discrimination, 1921-1950," *Journal of Urban History* 38, no. 6 (2012): 1036-1059.

[119] Powell, "Area Description D-1."

[120] Powell, "Area Description A-2," May 21, 1937, reproduced in *Uneven Ground*.

[121] Powell, "Area Description A-4," May 22, 1937, reproduced in *Uneven Ground*.

benefits and enshrined black workers' economic handicaps. But, given that Walltown and Trinity Park had precisely the same roots as Duke outposts, the statistics cited in the HOLC area surveys also serve as a window into the divergent outcomes black and white employees were *already* experiencing simply as a result of their service at the university.

Two smaller black communities in the western portion of Durham followed opposite paths as Walltown but also developed strong ties to the university. Hickstown, or the Crest Street area, and Brookstown do not seem to have emerged in response to Trinity College's move but grew increasingly tied to the college as it transitioned into Duke University. Duke's West Campus was built directly south of Hickstown, which was at the time more of a small, country village originally settled in the 1870s.[122] Brookstown was an even smaller neighborhood of about five streets situated between the old Trinity campus and the new West Campus of Duke University. Later histories of Hickstown would sometimes erroneously claim it arose in direct response to the construction of West Campus. But Hickstown was by then well established, and even boasted a Rosenwald School built in 1921.[123] Still, the association between Hickstown's growth and Duke's construction was real enough. Community members remembered the 1920s and 1930s as a period of expansion as many people who worked on the new campus's construction bought small plots of land or boarded with current residents. Women in the neighborhood sometimes made money by cooking food and bringing it to the men working on the project.[124]

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[122] Brinton, "Negro in Durham," 195.

[123] Roberts et al., *Durham Architectural and Historic Survey*, 163-164.

[124] Elizabeth Friedman, *Crest Street: A Family/Community Impact Statement* (Durham: Center for the Study of the Family and the State, Duke University, 1978), 5.

Despite this longer, more established history, many in Duke's community promulgated a history of Hickstown as a creation of the university. As far back as 1927, Duke students laughingly recounted the "Little Negro Settlement" that grew as a result of West Campus' construction. The report in the student newspaper was meant to dramatize the magnitude of the project to make "Duke University one of the greatest institutions in the country," but in the process revealed how that development was necessarily connected to the growth of nearby black communities. Moreover, the article exposed the racial contempt with which white students viewed the people hired to make it so. Conditions in the "one-roomed, tent-roofed shanties" were cramped: "Cooking, sleeping, eating, entertaining, sewing, washing and everything connected with family life was done in one room." Lest his readership fear the stifling effects of the "crowded conditions," the author reassured them that "the inhabitants of this queer little village seemed to be without worries or cares." "Little pickannines" played in the dirt and the adults lounged around "talking and laughing boisterously." In short, everyone "was content and

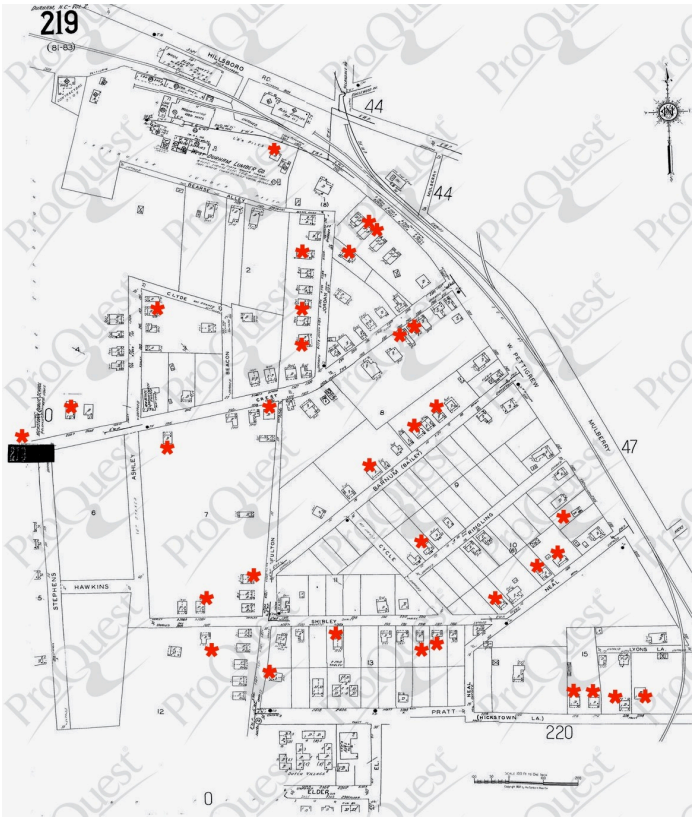

Figure 4.9 Hickstown residences in 1950. Black Duke employees in 1949 starred.

happy."[125] From the first, then, Duke students saw Hickstown as an exotic extension of university life.

Although it had a richer history than some reports allowed, Hickstown did become increasingly tied to the university over the 1930s and 1940s. Like most working-class residents of Durham in the interwar period, few in Hickstown owned a car.[126] Because it was in walking distance to the neighborhood, Duke remained a major employer for Hickstown residents even after the big building project concluded. Many local residents still worked in tobacco factories then, but, by the time that work dried up in the 1950s, the nearby Burlington mill and the Veteran's Affairs Hospital (built in 1953) had joined Duke as the neighborhood's major employers.[127] Into the 1970s, Hickstown residents touted "the location of the community and it's convenience to jobs" as one of the neighborhood's biggest benefits.[128] Though a survey found that about 20 percent of Hickstown residents worked at Duke in 1978, a full sixty percent reported having relatives who worked there or having once worked there themselves.[129]

Even that figure likely understates Duke's significance as an employer in the community. Longtime Duke workers like Mildred 'Ma' Booth became well-known and widely recognized within Hickstown. Born to sharecroppers in the 1920s, Booth worked as at Duke Hospital for over thirty years, first with the title of nurse's maid and later as an

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[125] "Changes Evident as Forces Work on New Campus – Spur-track Constructed on Property; Debris Cleared Away," *The Duke Chronicle*, Sept. 21, 1927.

[126] Friedman, *Crest Street*, 17.

[127] Ibid., 6.

[128] Ibid., 22.

[129] Ibid., 6.

"advanced patient care assistant."[130] She moved to Durham because she "had friends here who worked at the hospital" and they "told me they could use some help."[131] Booth recalled showing the ropes to the first group of black licensed practical nurses to be hired at Duke in 1948. She settled in Hickstown because it was close by. [132] Given Hickstown's small size (about two hundred families in the 1970s), most residents of the neighborhood likely knew long-time Duke employees like Booth.[133] In fact, one son and one daughter of Booth went to work at Duke as well.[134] Though the university never seemed to have employed a majority of Hickstown residents, the consistent presence of women like Booth meant that Duke cast a long shadow in the neighborhood nevertheless.

Hickstown was a decidedly poor neighborhood; a fact exacerbated by Duke's status as one of the neighborhood's major employers. While Duke and the VA hospital may have provided steady employment, none of the jobs they offered paid well. Sixty-five percent of Hickstown residents reported earning less than four hundred dollars a month in the late 1970s.[135] Given that Duke was paying many of its service workers less than three hundred dollars a month in 1970, many among that sixty-five percent may have worked full-time jobs

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[130] Margaret Howell, "'Ma' Booth: A Tradition at Duke," *Intercom*, Oct. 24, 1975, 3.

[131] Ibid.

[132] Ibid.

[133]For Booth's prominence among residents, see Hilda Odom, interviewed by Ashanta Scarlett, July 18, 1998, Anita Yarborough, interviewed by Antonio Calloway, July 5, 1998, Charlotte Patterson, interviewed by Ishmael Scarlett, July 19, 1998, printed in *Crest St. Community Stories* (Durham: Center for Documentary Studies, 1998), 35.

[134] Howell, "'Ma' Booth."

[135] Friedman, *Crest Street*, 14.

at the university.[136] And that pressure weighed on the prospects of community uplift. While community residents emphasized the importance of education and looked on their long-time neighborhood school with pride, few residents had been able to secure much beyond an elementary education.[137] One Hickstown resident remembered leaving school to go to work at Duke at the age of fifteen.[138]

By the middle of the century, Duke also began to exert increasing influence over Brookstown, a small West Durham community consisting of approximately eighty black families in the 1960s.[139] Like Hickstown, Brookstown was an established black neighborhood by the turn of the century, featuring one of the city's three black schools.[140] Brookstown's longer history probably lies in the discriminatory treatment of black workers by the textile and tobacco firms that dominated the city's economic landscape in the early part of the century. While many white mill workers lived in affordable, if restrictive, company housing around the mills, black employees enjoyed no such perks from their factory employment. Well paid when compared to other jobs usually available to African Americans, black tobacco workers made an estimated one third what their white counterparts did, and usually too little to afford a car. Brookstown was conveniently located within walking distance of the big tobacco factories downtown. Most of the homes on the larger

[136] "Duke University Bi-Weekly Job Classifications and Rate Ranges," c. 1971, Box 9, VP Records. Monthly wages calculated based on $1.80 rate, 40 hours a week.

[137] Friedman, *Crest Street*, 18.

[138] Ozzie Richmond, interviewed by Lanier Rand, June 1, 1977, H-0224, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

[139] "Brookstown in Blighted Area," *The Carolina Times*, Aug. 24, 1963, 1.

[140] Roberts et al., *Durham Architectural and Historic Survey*, 132.

neighborhood streets of Ferrell, Thaxton, and Rome were built by private investors looking to make a rental income off of these employees.[141] Though tobacco workers dominated this neighborhood at its start, it too slowly became integrated into Duke's economic sphere. By the late 1940s, a significant portion of the eighty families living in Brookstown sent at least one member to work at Duke (See Figure 4.10).[142]

Figure 4.10 Brookstown residences in 1950. Black Duke employees in 1949 starred. Buildings on right hand side of image are manufacturing facilities.

Though Duke drew a significant number of employees from others of the city's black neighborhoods, it never exerted quite the influence there as it did in Brookstown, Hickstown, and Walltown. Hayti was by far the largest and most prominent black neighborhood in Durham, with East End serving as the distant second. Hayti alone housed half of Durham's black residents.[143] Given their significance to the city, it is not surprising that a large number of Duke employees called Hayti and East End home, though never in numbers proportionate to the three smaller neighborhoods previously discussed. More than any other black neighborhood, Hayti was a study in contrasts. Durham's wealthiest black business owners all lived in Hayti, building

[141] Roberts et al., *Durham Architectural and Historic Survey*, 132, 134.

[142] *Hill's Durham (Durham County, NC) City Directory* (Richmond: Hill Directory Co., 1949).

[143] Lewis, "An Ecological Study of Selected Social Problems in Durham," 57.

"rambling two-story late Victorian" homes along Umstead and Fayetteville Streets.[144] The famous 'Black Wall Street' of Durham dominated Hayti. Over time, a sort of middle-class enclave featuring bungalow-style homes emerged in the more carefully laid out area around Dunbar Street.[145] On the other hand, the northernmost section of Hayti, parts of which were sometimes called Mexico, was much poorer and less developed, dominated by small rental properties.[146] Writing in 1930, sociologist Hugh Brinton labeled this area a particularly "undesirable location," describing it as the "center of Negro rooming houses and the transient population" with a population comprising "drifting Negroes and persons fresh from the farm."[147] Notwithstanding his predictably pejorative tone, Brinton's study correctly notes the relatively poor conditions of streets, curbs, and sidewalks in this area of north Hayti as compared

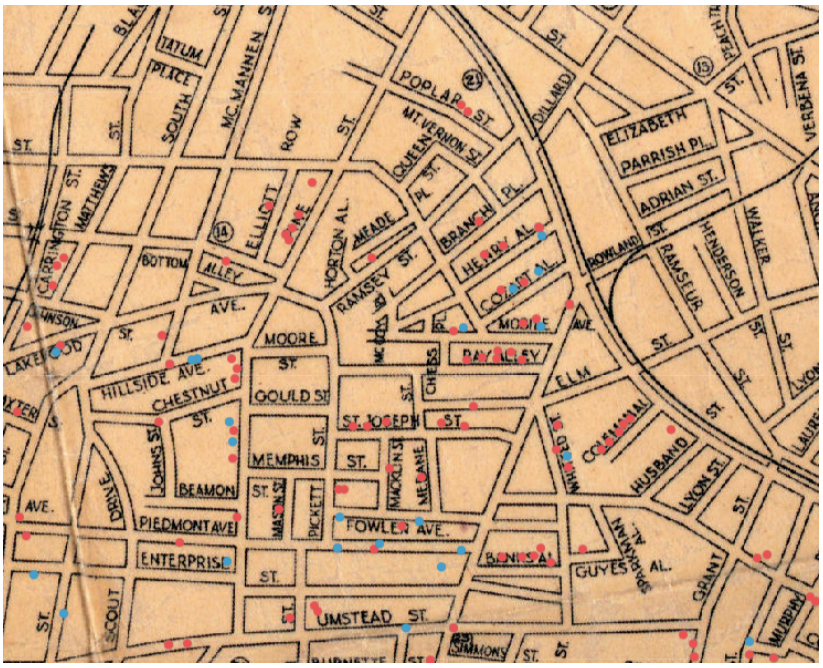

Figure 4.11 "Undesirable" area of Hayti, with black Duke employees in 1949 marked. Map shows concentration of Duke employees. Red are service workers. Those without sufficient detail are in blue.

[144] Roberts, et al., *Durham Architectural and Historic Survey*, 340.

[145] Brinton, *Negro in Durham*, 212; Roberts et al., *Durham Architectural and Historic Survey*, 116-119.

[146] Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham*, 111.

[147] Brinton, *Negro in Durham*, 206.

to the more fashionable areas further to the South.[148] It is in this area of Hayti where Duke employees disproportionately lived.

Over time, these working-class neighborhoods of Hickstown, Brookstown, Walltown and Hayti became more deeply connected to the university. Yet, while white Duke neighborhoods like Trinity Park, Duke Forest, and Hope Valley attracted additional investment and enjoyed steadily climbing home values, residents of Walltown and Brookstown benefited little from their connection to the university. They struggled to acquire home loans in the face of meager wages and discriminatory lending practices. While the university's administration negotiated for the city to provide street paving and lighting to their newly launched professorial communities (many of which, incidentally, sat outside of city limits), organizations headed or founded by black Duke employees fought for years to secure their neighborhood's an equal share in city services.[149] The university helped underwrite a new middle and professional class for Durham, but few black employees could be a part of it.

Black Communities and Oppositional Culture

By the early 1960s, Duke's service employees earned wages well below the national living standard. Hemmed in by racist housing policies in the city at large and unaided by the university's housing largesse, they lived within segregated and often overcrowded communities. If they did not own their own home, they might have rented small, cramped houses that had long since fallen into disrepair.[150] Certainly, many working-class whites in

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[148] Ibid., 203.

[149] Love, "Walltown."

[150] Robert Korstad and Jim Leloudis, *To Right These Wrongs: The North Carolina Fund and the Battle to End Poverty and Inequality in 1960s America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 176, 192; Greene, *Our Separate Ways*, 128.

Durham were also suffering financial hardship due to the loss of manufacturing jobs beginning in the 1940s.[151] However, many other white Durhamites experienced the vaunted upward mobility that the knowledge economy supposedly promised. And, as the editor of Durham's black newspaper, the *Carolina Times*, put it: "If white people have labored in the factories of the American tobacco industry for less than enough on which to live, they have had the satisfaction of knowing that their children may reap the benefits in a school that provides the very best training."[152] While white Duke neighborhoods like Duke Forest and Trinity Park continued to thrive, residents of Walltown and Hickstown saw their communities struggle to get by. Though Duke's black service workers did not blame the university for segregation, many began to see it as part of a broader political economy of racial exploitation – the Old South dressed up in a white coat.

Yet, by virtue of segregated community development, they also lived within and were often prominent members of neighborhoods that boasted legacies of civic and even political activism. As many black service workers enthusiastically joined in the civil rights movement that began sweeping the city and the nation in the late 1950s, employee leaders emerged who sought to bring Duke into the broader conversation about race and justice. Eventually they learned how to enlist the very familial and community networks that had brought them to work at Duke in the first place, building on some of the foundations laid by previous Duke employees. In part as a consequence of the university's development policies, black "Duke neighborhoods" developed sources of community cohesion and resistance in the 1930s,

[151] See Janiewski, *Sisterhood Denied*, 114.

[152] "Duke University," *The Carolina Times*, May 6, 1939, 4.

1940s, and 1950s. Those community resources would ultimately serve as important engines of a working-class revolt against Duke.

Walltown and Hickstown in particular were frequently described both by residents and outside observers as "close-knit," cohesive, and community-oriented.[153] Families lived in Walltown "from generation to generation," creating a dense social network.[154] Hickstown too boasted both a "family-like atmosphere and actual kin ties," which helped make people feel that the "community structure [was] integral to their lives."[155] As late as 1978, sixty-five percent of Hickstown residents still reported having relatives living in the community.[156] Many local Hickstown families spanned four generations – dating many families to the area throughout the period of Duke's growth.[157] The community also housed a broad age range that allowed members to help each other with their needs "both in emergencies and in daily affairs."[158] Older women in the community frequently watched the young children of mothers who worked, allowing them to contribute to the household income.[159] In turn, those older women reported that their close ties to family and neighbors allowed them the freedom and security to live alone.[160] While remaining in Duke's economic orbit, the people of

[153] Love, "Walltown;" Friedman, *Crest Street*.

[154] Laurel Mackay, "Walltown: portrait of a neighborhood," *Aeolus: The Chronicle's Weekly Magazine*, Oct. 10, 1979, 6.

[155] Friedman, *Crest Street*, 21.

[156] Ibid., 11.

[157] Ibid.

[158] Ibid., 21.

[159] Ibid., 12.

[160] Ibid.

Hickstown and Walltown had also developed their own avenues of mutual assistance and community belonging which supplemented the meager security offered by employment at the university.

And, as Theresa Lyons remembered about Walltown, "they were organized."[161] By the 1930s, Walltown residents had elected their "own little city council" and named Frizelle Daye "Bronze Mayor."[162] Donald Love remembered that this is when the residents "began to lean toward politics" to confront certain conditions in their neighborhood, like unpaved and unlit streets, poor school and recreation facilities, and the city's refusal to deliver mail to them.[163] Working-class residents of Walltown formed a number of civic organizations, including the Walltown Community Center, the Walltown Community Council, and the Walltown Community Club.[164] In the 1950s, the political action arm of the Community Council registered over three hundred residents to vote.[165] Residents in Hickstown founded their own community organizations and participated in voter registration drives in the 1940s and 1950s as well.[166] Brookstown likewise hosted a YWCA Industrial Club made up primarily of working-class women.[167]

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[161] Lyons interview.

[162] Ibid.

[163] Love, "Walltown."

[164] Brown, *Upbuilding Black Durham*, 340; Greene, *Our Separate Ways*, 15; Sybil Brewer, "Walltown Notes," *The Carolina Times*, Aug. 23, 1941, 3.

[165] Photograph and caption, *The Carolina Times*, Sept. 6, 1956, 1.

[166] Howell, "'Ma' Booth."

[167] See Etta Brasden, "Brookstown News…" *The Carolina Times*, May 6, 1950, 5.

Duke employees were intimately involved in community-building efforts in Hickstown, Walltown, and Brookstown. Daye and his wife Callie famously operated a barber and beauty shop in Walltown, making them centers of community life.[168] But Daye also worked for many years at Duke in the 1930s.[169] Likewise, Jay Lynn Alexander and Primrose Jones, two men credited with founding the Walltown Community Center, worked in housekeeping or food services at Duke.[170] Donald Love also occupied a prominent social position within Walltown, writing regular features for Durham's black newspaper and working with the community council on fundraising and social service campaigns.[171] Duke employees were often members of community councils in Brookstown and Hickstown too.[172]

Civic activism was only one way that Duke employees reacted to their working and living conditions. Many developed mechanisms for mutual assistance to ameliorate the conditions of their economic lives.[173] Some employees, like Donald Love, seemed to think of Duke fondly throughout his five decades of employment there.[174] Other black working-class residents of these neighborhoods had long harbored resentment towards the university, which represented to them the cycle of privilege and exploitation that drove Durham capitalism. "Old man Duke" made so much money when he was "slave-driver" that he could give

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[168] Greene, *Our Separate Ways*, 15, 27.

[169] *Hill's Durham (Durham County, NC) City Directory* (Richmond: Hill Directory Co., 1932, 1935, 1938).

[170] Smith-Wyatt interview; King, *If Gargoyles Could Talk*, 159.

[171] "Walltown to 'Salute' Donald N. Love," *The Carolina Times*, July 4, 1981, 10. See regular columns in the 1970s in the *Carolina Times*.

[172] *Hill's Durham (Durham County, NC) City Directory* (Richmond: Hill Directory Co., 1932, 1935, 1938, 1942, 1946).

[173] See Friedman, *Crest Street*, 12.

[174] See Love, "40-Year Employee."

enough money to rename a whole college. "That's money our people before us sweated to make for him." The university he built off their work was "just a place where rich men's sons go and live in luxury four years and come back to drive us in cotton mills, mines, in fields and these tobacco plants and work our day-lights out so they can have big, fine buildings like at Duke." [175]

As chapter two of this dissertation explores, there were a variety of reasons that an individual might accept a service job at Duke. As one such worker put it, in an economic environment where "about all you could get was working for white folks," getting a "public job" was comparatively attractive.[176] For a time, the city had held the promise of new industrial opportunities , but as the factories slowly left town beginning in the 1940s, even those jobs became more scarce and work less steady.[177] One employee remembered that "jobs were scarce in Durham" in the 1950s, as mechanization "cut out 75% of the people who worked in the mills and factories."[178] By the time that the famed black high school, Hillside High, held a 1964 "bosses' banquet" to honor the "businessmen and women" who had given work opportunities to the school's industrial education club, six of the fourteen in attendance represented Duke.[179]

But for all the reasons that some African American residents of Durham might work at Duke, the jobs open to them rarely paid more than the meager wages they might earn

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[175] Durham tobacco worker, quoted in Janiewski, *Sisterhood Denied*, 83.

[176] Mozilla McLaughlin, quoted in Murray, "African-American Family Experiences."

[177] Janiewski, *Sisterhood Denied*, 78.

[178] Oliver Harvey, quoted in Leah Wise, "Stirring the Pot: Oliver Harvey's Narrative Account of the Struggle to Organize Duke University," (master's thesis, Duke University, 1980), 39.

[179] "Businessmen and Women Honored at Hillside High," *The Carolina Times*, Apr. 25, 1964.

elsewhere. In fact, Ozzie Richmond remembered working at Duke for only a year before leaving for a similar job at the department store Kress because he "couldn't make no money" at Duke.[180] In the early 1950s, black women in housekeeping made forty-three cents, and black men made sixty-three cents at a maximum (the state minimum wage was then seventy-five cents an hour).[181] One employee remembered that a local factory was paying "unskilled" black workers between eighty-five cents and one dollar ten years earlier.[182] People "would go to Duke and get a job when they couldn't get one any place else. Duke really used that" to keep wages low.[183] Even when professing to like his later job, George Scarborough Jr. noted that he was "getting housekeepers pay" and that his brother, who worked at the Liggett and Meyers tobacco plant, was getting "a bigger salary" and a "better retirement plan."[184]

Those inchoate feelings of resentment and disillusion became sharpened as the civil rights movement swept Durham beginning in the late 1950s. Legacies of community organizing and working-class orientation made "Duke neighborhoods" like Walltown, Hickstown, and Brookstown central nodes of activism. When local civil rights leader and attorney Floyd McKissick revived the city's NAACP youth councils, he drew in large numbers of young women from those same neighborhoods.[185] Much of the activism aimed at desegregating the city's schools likewise came from Walltown or Hickstown.[186] Almost all

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[180] Richmond interview.

[181] Wise, "Stirring the Pot," 34.

[182] Ibid., 31.

[183] Harvey, quoted in Ibid., 39.

[184] Scarborough interview.

[185] Greene, *Our Separate Ways*, 26.

[186] Ibid., 71.

of the fourteen youths to first request reassignment to all-white schools hailed from those neighborhoods, including the child of Callie and Frizelle Daye.[187] Another Walltown resident filed the first direct legal challenge to the segregated public schools in Durham, ultimately paving the way for Cora Cole-McFadden, a Brookstown resident, to desegregate Durham High School.[188]

For many of the movement's working-class participants, personal or familial economic ties to Duke often served to animate their activism. One young activist, Vivian McCoy, was raised on stories of her mother's efforts to advance her career, her experiences with discrimination as one of the hospital's first black LPNs, and her refusal to be cowed by the university's power.[189] Duke employees took part in community protests and brought the principles of the civil rights movement to campus. Recalling one of his first successful protests, Oliver Harvey remembered an "East Campus bus [that] carried nothing but Duke people to work." Since he "worked at Duke," he figured that "if I got on and the back was filled up, I'd sit in the front." After a confrontation with the bus driver, Harvey and another black employee named Beatrice Noore walked off the bus. Several dozen female students spontaneously got off with them, saying "y'all clean our rooms, we gonna walk with ya."[190] Harvey and others were beginning to demand the just rewards for their service at the university. His success contrasted sharply with the experiences of the maids' bus protest of 1942, pointing to the opportunity opened by the broader civil right struggle.

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[187] Ibid., 72.

[188] Ibid., 96.

[189] McCoy, quoted in Ibid., 100.

[190] Harvey, quoted in Wise, "Stirring the Pot," 54-5.

Harvey's commitment to confronting discrimination on Duke's campus made him the most prominent leader of a small, but increasingly vocal group of employee dissidents in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Harvey had sought to organize among his peers from his first days at Duke in 1951. Born in rural Durham County, he had worked in several industries before taking a job as a night janitor at Duke in 1951.[191] At each of his three prior jobs – American Tobacco, Watts Hospital, and a bottling company – Harvey protested segregation in the company and within unions, getting himself into trouble.[192] He carried that same activist attitude to Duke, where he soon began circulating petitions and refusing to call students 'Mister' and 'Miss,' as was custom.[193] At first, he found few supporters among his fellow employees, later saying they were either "too scared and ignorant" or had been bought off with "secret wage increases and promotions to keep them quiet in the future."[194] Only nine employees signed his initial petition.[195] Still, Harvey continued on with his own daily, quixotic protests with a resilience that eventually paid dividends.

Within a few years, Harvey found a more welcome reception. Harvey had likely underestimated resistance to Duke among his colleagues, but, for much of the university's history, that resistance operated largely on the level of 'infrapolitics.' Behind the swell of civil rights activism in the community more broadly, employees began manifesting their

[191] Ed McConville, "Oliver Harvey: 'Got To Take Some Risks,'" 1978, clipping, Box 24, Douglas Knight Records, DU Archives.

[192] Ibid.

[193] Ibid.

[194] Ibid.

[195] Wise, "Stirring the Pot," 47.

dissatisfaction in more open terms.[196] In 1959, two students wrote an article in the school newspaper, *The Chronicle*, criticizing the pay of the university's service workers. Though noting that "most…were extremely reluctant to talk for fear of losing their jobs," John Strange and Scott Stevens cited damning testimony from some service workers. One maid, who was "the sole provider for her children," noted succinctly that "it is impossible to live on" her weekly wage of less than twenty dollars. The white housekeepers, the maids anonymously reported, were "racially biased [and] intolerant."[197] Though little seems to have resulted from this disclosure, the article and its sourcing suggest that maids and janitors were beginning to vocalize their displeasure.

Over time, black Durham's anger at Duke and the white privilege it represented grew. A September 1962 editorial in the black-owned *Carolina Times* captured the mounting sense of unfairness some employees felt. Editor Louis Austin wrote that the "Negro employees of Duke University did not know whether to cry, snicker, or rejoice at the announcement" that Duke now paid professors salaries competitive with schools like Harvard University. What about making public the "average salary paid the maids, janitors, laundry workers, porters and its other Negro employees […]at this richest school in the South?" Calling the university "a rich old woman all dressed up in finery" to hide her dirty underwear, Austin excoriated the high salaries the administration apparently sought to tout. They came, he said, "at the expense of the poor devils who have to do the scrubbing, cooking, sweeping, mowing, washing, ironing and other menial tasks at starvation wages."[198] The way rank-and-file black

[196] For the civil rights movement in Durham, see Green, *Our Separate Ways*.

[197] John Strange and Scott Stevens, "Maids Sweep in Weekly Pay of $19.50," *The Duke Chronicle*, Mar. 6, 1959.

[198] "A Rich but Ragged Old Duke University," *The Carolina Times*, Sept. 29, 1962, 2.

workers at Duke spoke of the institution – "Them Dukes fired Joe James today" – also points to a powerful, if yet largely untapped, feeling that the university was part and parcel of Durham's larger power structure, a reinvention of the area's long history of racial exploitation.[199]

If local civil rights activism awakened some of Duke's employees to the possibilities of collective action, the anti-poverty activism of the mid 1960s equipped even more with the skills and desire to confront Duke head-on. Funded through the state's North Carolina Fund in 1963, Operation Breakthrough (OBT) grew into an aggressive, vibrant, grassroots community action program.[200] Under the leadership of Howard Fuller (later a union business agent), OBT offered job training courses as well as recruited local poor people to participate directly in the decisions affecting them through community councils. While many of the older "Duke neighborhoods" already had similar organizations, OBT focused its efforts on the poor areas of the East End and Hayti, sections where many Duke employees resided.[201] Several Duke employees were elected to responsible positions in these councils, including Alice Barbee (Hayti) and Christine Strudwick (East End).[202] Both Barbee and Strudwick would go on to take leadership positions in union organizing. Alice's husband, John, served on the union's first executive board just three years later, while Strudwick joined the hospital organizing executive board where she protested the actions of the "white mistresses" in the

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[199] Quoted in Wise, "Stirring the Pot," 44.

[200] See Korstad and Leloudis, *To Right These Wrongs*, 177-197.

[201] Ibid., 179-180.

[202] "Neighborhood Improvement Club," United Organizations for Community Improvement (UOCI) Neighborhood Councils and Organizers, Folder 4579, North Carolina Fund Records, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina; "Unsung Heroines to be Honored Saturday," *The Carolina Times*, May 30, 1981, 10.

supervisory staff.[203] The community councils (later joined in a separate organization called United Organizations for Community Improvement) regularly participated in Duke employee work actions, including staffing picket lines.[204] Finally, the organization's adult education programs would prepare the first major wave of black clerical workers at Duke in the late 1960s, many of whom went on to be active in campus worker organizing.[205]

The employee organizing efforts detailed in the following two chapters were not, in simple terms, an extension of the work of the OBT. But these connections highlight the ways in which Duke worker protests were part of a broader mobilization of Durham's black poor and working-class. Moreover, they reveal how Duke's black employees began to connect the problems in their neighborhoods with their problems at work, how they came to identify the university as being at the heart of a purportedly modern knowledge economy built on segregation and exploitation. As one employee activist put it: "When you leave Duke you go back to the same segregated neighborhood with the same people."[206]

Duke's actions in the early 1960s exacerbated the community's dawning sense of betrayal. In 1963, several attacks were reported on white women on the northern outskirts of West Campus. Police apparently believed the suspect was harboring somewhere in Hickstown and put the neighborhood under "heavy surveillance."[207] The neighborhood was on edge. Duke officials embraced the police department's heavy-handed approach. "A police

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[203] Christine Strudwick, "Black Workers," *The Duke Chronicle*, Mar. 16, 1971.

[204] Wise, "Stirring the Pot," 87.

[205] Karen Brodkin Sacks, *Caring by the Hour: Women, Work, and Organizing at Duke University Medical Center* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 57-8.

[206] Editorial, *We the People* 1, no. 1, Mar. 17, 1966, Box 16, Knight Records.

[207] "Hickstown Explosive," *The Carolina Times*, Mar. 23, 1963, 1.

dragnet" swept through the hospital and university. "Every Negro male worker […] was systematically being sent through a line up for possible identification."[208] Told by their supervisors to report to a meeting, these men were instead confronted by police questioning. Dr. Barnes Woodhall confirmed the incident for the paper, seemingly without compunction. "Everybody is being questioned," he noted, "including bus drivers and garbage collectors."[209]

The tension in Hickstown surrounding these assaults testified to its uncomfortable relationship with Duke. Hickstown was next door, but a world apart. And despite the heavy police presence in the neighborhood, a carload of white men could drive through their neighborhood and fire a gun without being stopped.[210] Only two days after reporting the "line-up," *The Carolina Times* ran a story announcing the formation of a club for "Duke University Employees."[211] No further information about the club was forthcoming, and there is no indication that this group had any association with Oliver Harvey's formal efforts to unionize. Nevertheless, the timing of this group's formation suggests that they may have hoped to harness discontent about the university's handling of the incident. The newspaper followed the assault story for months. It reminded readers that, after all the harassment, police seemed no closer to discovering the perpetrator and altogether unwilling to disclose any updates on their investigation.[212] Together, Duke and city officials had revealed their true feelings: every black man a suspect, and the neighborhood – conveniently located to supply the university's service workforce – a looming menace to campus safety.

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[208] "Negro Males Put Through Interrogations," *The Carolina Times*, Mar. 23, 1963, 1.

[209] Ibid.

[210] "Hickstown Explosive," *The Carolina Times*, Mar. 23, 1963, 1.

[211] "Duke University Employees Announce Formation of Club," *The Carolina Times*, Mar. 26, 1963, 3.

[212] "Editorial: Not Conducive to Law and Order," *The Carolina Times*, May 18, 1963, 2.

A series of confrontations around urban renewal and public housing in the late 1950s and 1960s highlighted the changing relationship between black service workers and the university as well as the spatial dimensions of those changes. These episodes reveal both black Durham's vulnerability in the face of changing university preferences and employees' increasingly vocal resistance to Duke's unilateral power in their communities. Hickstown, Brookstown, and Walltown had developed as enclaves of Duke employees precisely because of their proximity to the university. Few service employees at Duke could afford to buy a vehicle through the 1950s, making nearby housing essential to their livelihoods. University officials had tolerated the nearness of these neighborhoods largely out of necessity. In the 1950s, hospital administrators had even commented on the devotion with which "orderlies, dietetic and housekeeping personnel bundled up and walked" to campus during a snow storm.[213] However, university administrators and planners began to look upon urban renewal programs in the 1960s as an opportunity to make changes to this arrangement. In 1963, they suggested to city commissioners that Brookstown "made a possible urban renewal area."[214] In a public meeting to declare the neighborhood "blighted," a necessary first step to unlock federal renewal funds, it was "pointed out" that "Duke University is interested in the area as a possible addition to its campus."[215] Urban renewal would allow the university to clear a poor neighborhood close to campus, rehab it, and finally to obtain it. By helping to bring about Brookstown's "redevelopment," Duke administrators had once again remade the city's

[213] "The Show Must Go On," *Intercom*, Feb. 1, 1954, 4.

[214] "Brookstown in Blighted Area," *The Carolina Times*, Aug. 24, 1963, 1.

[215] Ibid.

geography to suit the university's needs. This time, black Brookstown was a problem to be solved instead of a resource to be exploited.

A 1967 controversy over the Damar Court Apartments also portended administrators' changing calculus about the nearness of the university's poor, black neighbors, but revealed the limits of Duke's power in the face of an increasingly organized black public. Damar Court, a private apartment complex which sat across from the university's married student housing, was offered for sale in 1967.[216] Hearing that the public housing authority intended to buy the complex, university officials quickly outbid them. Privately, administrators acknowledged that they feared the proximity of public housing tenants. When anti-poverty groups (led in part by university employees) responded with outrage, administrators withdrew the university's bid. However, at the same time, the university announced that it would also sell the married student housing building to the public housing authority. Though touting this offer as a generous and magnanimous gesture, the university's action confirmed activists' cynicism about its motives. First intent on blocking the arrival of undesirable neighbors, administrators settled for quarantining them.

In response to provocations like Damar Court, Duke employees and their supporters seized the community resources of working-class Durham - resources developed in response to the segregation encouraged by Duke - to pressure the university. Workers' traditions of mutual assistance and community support had deepened the already rich networks of "immediate and not-so-immediate kin and in-laws" that wove through Duke's campus.[217] As Oliver Harvey and other employees began organizing in earnest, they built directly from

[216] For the source for this information about Damar Court and a more detailed description of the controversy, see Greene, *Our Separate Ways*.

[217] Sacks, *Caring by the Hour*, 123.

those networks. Harvey had people "talk to others they knew in other departments, to their relatives and friends" who worked there.[218] He sought the assistance of fellow employees like Genators Lawrence, Maude Evans, and Iola Woods, long-time residents of Duke neighborhoods in Walltown, Hickstown, and East End.[219] Older workers like John Canady, who "kept up with what was going on in the community" were invaluable resources.[220] One activist later said of employee leader Rose Gattis: "A lot of workers are her neighbors, are her church members or friends and neighbors of her church members."[221] These "ties of kinship, friendship, or neighborhood" – the ties through which many had come to Duke in the first place – were repurposed to bind activists and spread the news of unionization.[222]

Harvey and others also leveraged the relationships they had built community leaders through years of civic engagement and civil rights activism. The editor of the *Carolina Times*, Louis Austin, arranged a space for the first union meeting where one hundred employees announced their formal organization as the Duke Employees Benevolent Society.[223] His paper touted the work of the union for years. Calling the university a "rich old lady [that] hides behind the false face of a non-profit institution," a *Carolina Times* excoriated Duke for their treatment of the "underpaid and exploited Negro employees." These "fine, respected and long time [sic]" employees felt "backed against the wall in their

[218] Harvey, quoted in Wise, "Stirring the Pot," 47.

[219] Ibid., 67-8.

[220] Harvey, quoted in Ibid, 59.

[221] Quoted in Sacks, *Caring by the Hour*, 107.

[222] Sacks, *Caring by the Hour*, 136.

[223] Wise, "Stirring the Pot," 67-8.

efforts to earn enough money for their labor to live moderately comfortable" lives.[224] The editorial linked the employees' union with the larger city-wide movement of anti-poverty activism and warned the university of the consequences of further inaction.

There is perhaps no better measure of the changing relationship between some of Duke's black service workers and their employer than Walltown – the neighborhood named for George Wall, remembered by many white members of the university as the most "faithful servant of our beloved institution."[225] When a Duke employee, union member, and anti-poverty program alumnus was fired from the dining halls for insubordination in 1965, she swiftly set up a meeting with the Walltown Community Center.[226] One of the founders of the Center, Primrose Jones, a Duke food service worker, began serving as a trustee for the union soon after its launch.[227] After hearing her story, Walltown residents volunteered to spread the word about the union.[228]

CONCLUSION

Duke's employment and housing policies continuously reshaped Durham's physical and social landscape. Administrators, in their dealings with Durham residents in the 1930s, seemed torn between a desire to maintain an atmosphere of remove from the city and the new challenges that accompanied the need to people their grand university complex. Their varied approaches to those challenges - ranging from a dismissal of responsibility to more direct

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[224] "Editorial: Better Wages for Negro Employees of Duke," *The Carolina Times*, Mar. 13, 1965, 2.

[225] Hersey Everett Spence, *"I Remember": Recollections and Reminiscences of Alma Mater* (Durham: The Seeman Printery Inc., 1954), 139.

[226] Shirley Ramsey, "Walltown Community Meeting," *We the People* 1, no. 4, May 23, 1966, Labor Unions Reference Collection, DU Archives.

[227] "Local 77 to Elect Nine Trustees," *We the People* 1, no. 4, May 23, 1966, Unions Reference Collection.

[228] Ramsey, "Walltown Community Meeting."

engagement as neighborhood developers - reflected administrators' determination to achieve their lofty ambitions for the university as well as their assumptions about the value of certain kinds of work and certain kinds of workers to that project. The university's policies maintained and encouraged a racially segregated residential landscape, and benefited socially and economically from the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion that landscape manifested.

Collectively, these policies wedded the city's future development firmly to the university. Just as the shared spatial and economic experiences of Duke's black service employees situated them as a class beholden to the university, they helped spur the development of an oppositional culture with important historical repercussions. Though they did not blame segregation itself on the university, these employees came to associate Duke with a political economy of racial exploitation. Having spent years working in the service of the university, they were not reaping the rewards that it promised. These employees laid the groundwork for a large-scale revolt against the structures of the knowledge economy in the 1960s.

CHAPTER 5: THE END OF THAT "HAPPY INFORMALITY" AND THE MAKING OF THE "FOURTH ESTATE"[1]

Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination on April 4th, 1968 shocked the nation, setting off outpourings of grief, soul-searching, and protests across the country.[2] At Duke, fifteen hundred mostly white students spent four days camped out on the quad in spontaneous protest, refusing to go to class or eat at the dining hall and demanding collective bargaining rights for university employees.[3] A telegram from Presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy to Duke students on April 10, 1968 read: "I join with you in mourning Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.…By your actions in support of the employees of the university who seek recognition for their bargaining rights, you set a standard that all should emulate."[4] The folk singer Pete Seeger appeared at a rally on campus, singing the classic labor song, "Which side are you on, boy? Which side are you on?"[5] Just two of the national liberal figures to celebrate

[1] "State of the University," Box 14, Vice President for Business and Finance Records [Hereafter VP Records] Duke University Archives; Charles Huestis memorandum, Box 9, VP Records. The existing "estates" were the administration, the faculty, and the students.

[2] African Americans rose up in protest in over one hundred cities across the nation. There was fear that the same would happen in Durham. The city instituted a curfew and blanketed the city with police. For the response to King's assassination in various cities, see Alyssa Ribeiro, 'A Period of Turmoil': Pittsburgh's April 1968 Riots and Their Aftermath," *Journal of Urban History* 39, no 2(Apr 2012): 147-171; and Jessica Elfenbein et al., eds., *Baltimore '68: Riots and Rebirth in An American City* (Temple University Press, 2011); and J. Samuel Walker, *Most of 14th Street is Gone: The Washington D.C. Riots of 1968* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018). For Durham's response, see Steve Evans, "Durham Quiet," *The Duke Chronicle*, April 8, 1968, 1.

[3] See coverage of the Vigil in *The Duke Chronicle*, April 8-11, 1968. The number of 1500 comes from Dave Schaffer, "Negotiators seek a better bargain," *The Duke Chronicle*, April 11, 1968, 2.

[4] Richard Smurthwaite, "Vigil support grows, Kennedy endorses idea," *The Duke Chronicle*, April 10, 1968, 1. Kennedy announced his presidential campaign a mere two weeks before the Vigil.

[5] Steven Evans, "Seeger appears at Vigil rally; Dr. Blackburn reports on faculty," *The Duke Chronicle*, April 19, 1968.

the student protest, Kennedy and Seeger represented the public fascination at the sight of over one thousand young, mostly white college students shivering in the rain.

In fact, the national press attention that the student protest attracted often seemed to overshadow the cause which it emerged to support: the rights of university employees. The black employees of the university's dining and operations departments had been planning tirelessly for a protest and strike. King's assassination and the students' support only added moral weight and urgency to their years-long organizing efforts. At the same time as the students gathered in the quad, employees walked out in mass. Weeks after the students returned to their classes and the glare of the national spotlight abated, hundreds of employees weathered pressure, intimidation, and deprivation to maintain the line. Asked later what kept them going, employee leader Oliver Harvey placed the strike firmly within the long struggle for racial justice, replying, "You think you can starve us to death? Man, we been hungry 300 years."[6]

Chancellor Pro Tempore Dr. Barnes Woodhall noted that the student protests at Duke amounted to an "attempted politicization of the campus" that posed powerful questions about university governance.[7] He likened it to the unrest sweeping colleges such as UC-Berkeley, where student protest leader Mario Savio famously declared the university "the machine."[8] Scholars of late-1960s campus unrest more generally have focused overwhelmingly on such

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[6] Ed McConville, "Oliver Harvey: Got to Take Some Risks," *Southern Exposure* 6 (1978), clipping in Box 24, Douglas M. Knight Records, DU Archives.

[7] Barnes Woodhall, Memorandum to Faculty Committee on Student Concerns, Apr 18, 1969, Box 6, VP Records.

[8] The Free Speech Movement was linked to the Civil Rights Movement in other ways, of course. See Robert Cohen, *Freedom's Orator: Mario Savio and the Radical Legacy of the 1960s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

student protest.[9] With few exceptions, most scholarship has not examined the links between student politics and campus labor.[10] Those that look at the New Left's "turn to the working class" mostly envision it as a movement away from campus *into* places where the working-class traditionally existed.[11] A focus on student activists themselves is warranted, of course. However, such a focus misses the presence of the working-class on campus itself, fails to investigate how and why student and worker activism came to overlap, and, just as importantly, when they did not. Despite the 1968 protest's publicity, students and faculty proved powerful but unreliable allies for employee activists at Duke.

Woodhall mischaracterized both the fuel of Duke's campus "politicization" and its timing. In 1968, the student protestors were the supporters, not the leaders, of a movement that was driven by black employee activists. By linking student dissatisfaction at university authority to their own race- and class-based critiques of the university, employees themselves launched the debate on "what kind of polity the university is."[12] Moreover, the events of 1968 thrust into public view concerns that simmered on campus for nearly a decade. In the

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[9] See Matthew Levin, *Cold War University: Madison and the New Left in the Sixties* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013); and Blake Slonecker, "The Columbia Coalition: African Americans, New Leftists, and Counterculture at the Columbia University Protest of 1968," *Journal of Social History* 41, no. 4 (Summer 2008) 967-996. There are many other local histories of student protest. For a treatment of the student movement as part of a broader, interconnected series of movement that made up the New Left, see Van Gosse, *Rethinking the New Left: An Interpretive History* (New York: Palgrave, 2005).

[10] Peter Levy briefly mentions Duke as an example of the crossover between student New Left and worker organizing more generally, and mentions only one other college (the University of Missouri) in an endnote. Peter B. Levy, *The New Left and Labor in the 1960s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994): 137-138, 242 (n34). For coalitions between black students and workers at UNC, see Derek Williams, "'It Wasn't Slavery Time Anymore': Foodworkers' Strike at Chapel Hill, Spring 1969" (master's thesis, University of North Carolina, 1979).

[11] See Kieran Taylor, "Turn to the Working Class: The New Left, Black Liberation, and the U.S. Labor Movement, 1967-1981" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2007).

[12] Barnes Woodhall, Memorandum to Faculty Committee on Student Concerns, Apr 18, 1969, Box 6, VP Records.

university's early years, Duke administrators had succeeded in constructing a set of legal and social protections for the university that held down wages and forestalled employee organizing.[13] A current of dissatisfaction had long percolated among many of the university's service workers, operating primarily on the level of subterranean "infrapolitics," but occasionally bursting into full view.[14] In the 1960s, just as administrators launched what they termed "the Decade of Development," the university's special privileges were weakened and a committed cadre of employee activists began organizing their peers, seeking to remake their status in the knowledge economy through collective action.[15]

Across a series of employee protests between 1963 and 1968, dissatisfied workers raised fundamental questions about the role of nonacademic jobs at a university. They wanted to replace what they saw as rank paternalism – what one administrator wistfully called "happy informality" - with a formal employment relationship. And they wanted that relationship to recognize their humanity and value to the university, while addressing long-term patterns of racial discrimination, exploitation, and disempowerment on campus. Drawing on moral claims for racial justice and the university's own arguments about its special status, these employees attracted the support of vocal students and faculty, eventually forcing the administration to react. Only in response to this pressure did President Douglas Knight and the university's administration make lurching and reluctant attempts to build on the limited personnel reforms of the 1950s and "modernize" the university's personnel management.[16] But, the pace and specific mechanisms of this modernization project often led

[13] See Chapter 1.

[14] See Chapters 2 and 4.

[15] See Chapter 4.

[16] See Chapters 2 and 3.

to greater antagonisms and, eventually, to the 1968 mass protest that so shook campus administrators.

Questioning Authority on Campus: The Seeds of a Strike Among Service Workers

By 1960, Duke University boasted a sprawling and impressive physical plant comprised of East Campus, West Campus, and the Hospital. Nonacademic workers were ubiquitous across all three campuses. On East, around sixty employees cooked and served food in women's dormitories Southgate and Gilbert-Addoms to the thousands of women residing on campus. More than 100 maids and janitors cleaned the hallways, dorm rooms, and classrooms there, making beds, scrubbing chalkboards, and taking out the trash. West Campus was much larger; dining workers there were distributed across five facilities, working in cafeteria-style settings in the Main Dining Hall and Graduate Center, waitress-served dining in the Oak Room, and counter service at the Grill and Dope Shop. Nearly 200 maids and janitors toiled on West, keeping the jewel of the university gleaming. At Duke Hospital, the working conditions were more compact. All the food was made in one central "dietetics" facility, and was then served cafeteria style or delivered to patient rooms. Maids, janitors, porters, and ward helpers moved through the private and public spaces that made up the hospital at all hours of the day. Across all three campuses, clerical workers labored in nearly every office while many more worked in centralized bookkeeping and records offices. By the mid 1960s, clerical and service workers at Duke numbered more than 3,000.[17]

[17] This figure excludes the "technical category," which was itself over one thousand. This category included people working in a very broad range of work, from cleaning test tubes to operating the X-ray machine. Some of these jobs evolved out of 'service' jobs, some from earlier 'clerical' positions, and some required formal credentials. "Employment Growth," attachment to J.L. Bennett to Mr. C.B. Huestis, May 31, 1968, Box 7, VP Records.

Beginning in the 1930s, administrators carefully curated the social makeup of the university's nonacademic workforce. They hired local black residents to work in most of the service jobs on campus, overseen by a cadre of white supervisors. Administrators, students, and other white employees all viewed this arrangement as a manifestation of natural social relations. On the other hand, clerical jobs were reserved for whites, almost exclusively white women, who administrators said provided the "heart" for the university. But cracks had begun to show in this arrangement. The university's growth combined with black employees' discontent to increasingly challenge both the racial hierarchies embedded in the system and the stories administrators told about the existence and necessity of those hierarchies.

By the late 1950s, an oppositional culture among the university's black employees began to coalesce into organized resistance. Like African-Americans across the South, thousands of Durham's black residents joined sit-ins, selective buying campaigns, bus and school desegregation efforts, and mass marches.[18] Over years of concerted activism and sacrifice, they slowly dismantled the city's most egregious forms of discrimination and demanded fairness, equity, and justice. Drawing from this energy, more employees became interested in organizing to resist the systems of exploitation and discrimination on campus. In the late 1950s, people like Margaret Sims and Primrose Jones joined a budding labor organization headed by Oliver Harvey. Though never intended to be a segregated union, these activists' roots in civil rights work, their experience with a racially segregated labor structure at Duke, and the discontent among black service workers led organizers to focus

[18] For the black freedom movement in Durham, see Christina Greene, *Our Separate Ways: Women and the Black Freedom Movement in Durham, North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Francis Steven Redburn, "Protest and Policy in Durham, North Carolina" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1971).

their efforts on those employees. Organizers began harnessing the same familial and social networks that brought many in to work at Duke to begin with, forging those networks into activist pipelines. While remaining small in number, activists like Harvey and Sims were able to parlay the strength of the local civil rights movement to extract some concessions from university management in the early 1960s, including wage raises and a few promotional opportunities.[19] By 1964, nine African Americans worked at the university as clerical workers, and there were six black managers in the dining and operations departments.[20]

Despite their limited numbers, these activist employees made their presence felt. In a series of proposals in 1959 and 1960, members of the university's personnel department suggested adopting first a set of formal "non-academic personnel policies and procedures" and then a wholesale "job analysis and job evaluation study."[21] The university employed more than 4,200 employees, they noted, "and the personnel problems which have developed are challenging."[22] Already a decade removed from the first job and wage study commissioned in 1947, the personnel department criticized the continued haphazard approach to salaries and job descriptions, and the complete lack of an employee handbook.[23] Turnover and other "pressures," they claimed, had caused "persistent and aggravating"

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[19] See Chapter 4.

[20] John M. Dozier, Business Manager, "Employment Statistics," Apr. 8, 1964, Box 6, Knight Records.

[21] "Proposals for the Development of Non-Academic Personnel Policies and Procedures at Duke University," n.d., Box 12, A. Hollis Edens Records, DU Archives; "Proposal for a Job Analysis and Job Evaluation Study Duke University," Oct. 26, 1960, Box 16, J. Deryl Hart Records, DU Archives.

[22] "Proposals for the Development of Non-Academic Personnel Policies and Procedures," Box 12, Edens Records.

[23] Ibid. For discussion of first job and wage study, see Chapter 2.

problems.[24] The changes they proposed would bring the university in line with "most modern, large corporate organizations."[25] Though they did not describe the particular "pressures" they were under, they referred often to the "frictions" caused by wide variations in policy and lamented the actions of "aggressive employees [who] receive benefits to which they are less properly entitled."[26] Later, as administrators readied a yearly budget proposal in 1963, they acknowledged that it was "absolutely necessary on both economic and moral grounds to make more adequate adjustments" for nonacademic staff.[27] Of course, ideas about "modern" institutions and fears about spiraling salary costs played a role in shaping these efforts. However, administrators had also clearly begun to feel pressure from below.

Harvey and his fellow organizers sought to capitalize on this progress, however minor, by expanding upon and formalizing the efforts of the post-civil rights era. By 1965, hundreds of employees started to participate in the nascent labor organization on campus. In February of that year, Harvey officially announced the creation of an independent union – the Duke Employees Benevolent Association – and began signing up members.[28] Within a few months, according to the union, 900 of the 1200 black employees in the hospital were wearing the buttons of the recently renamed "Local 77."[29] They convinced one thousand

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[24] "The Organization for Business and Finance Duke University," Report, January 1964, Box 9, Business Division Records, DU Archives.

[25] Supervisor's Manual, Nov. 12, 1962, Office of Human Resources Reference Collection, DU Archives.

[26] "Proposals for the Development of Non-Academic Personnel Policies and Procedures," Edens Records.

[27] "General Budget Proposals for Duke University, 1963-1964, With Particular Reference to the Academic Division," n.d., Box 10, Hart Records.

[28] See Chapter 4.

[29] "History of Local 77," *The crisis on our campus does not appear to be over*, flyer, Box 7, VP Records.

people to sign a petition advocating for job mobility and pay raises.[30] Drawing from a broad cross-section of the university's service workforce, the nascent Local 77 launched work stoppages, circulated petitions, and distributed periodicals. Though organizers could not yet demand a National Labor Relations Board-sanctioned election, they worked to find other ways to exert pressure on the administration.[31]

In keeping with the roots of campus organizing in the civil rights movement, the union's program in the mid-1960s combined a range of specific, material demands with broad claims to justice and dignity. The union wanted changes to almost every aspect of working conditions at the university. For one, organizers hammered Duke's administration on the "clearly inadequate" wages the university paid its service employees – as low as eighty-five cents an hour for maids and ninety cents an hour for janitors in 1965.[32] Foreseeing a significant public relations problem with these figures, the administration raised their wages shortly after the union's organization to $1.00 an hour and $1.10 an hour respectively.[33] For service workers in housekeeping and dining, these increases were hardly sufficient. When dining hall worker and union member Hattie Belle Williams asked her fellow employees to compare "our daily salaries with our daily work," the implication was clear: they were giving a lot more than they were getting in return.[34]

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[30] "Negro Given High Position," *The Duke Chronicle*, Apr. 16, 1965.

[31] For university employees' exclusion from the National Labor Relations Act, see Chapter 1.

[32] [No Signature] to H. Franklin Browers, Manager of Operations, February 12, 1965, Box 36, Women's College Records, DU Archives. Administrators of universities like Duke had succeeded in winning for their institutions exemption from most government labor regulations. See Chapter 1.

[33] McKissick to Dozier, May 29, 1965, Box 32, Knight Records.

[34] Hattie Belle Williams, "A New World," *We the People*, May 23, 1966, Unions Reference Collection.

From workers' perspective, the lack of advancement opportunities and regular summer layoffs exacerbated the low wages. "Duke is full of dead-end jobs," the union newsletter protested. "Young women are hired as maids and after 25 years of loyal service they find themselves still doing the same work" for less than a dollar an hour.[35] To add insult to injury, dormitory maids and most employees in college food service were laid off for several months each year, interrupting their seniority and endangering what little financial security they had.[36] A paternalistic administration refused to offer them job training opportunities needed to qualify them for better paying jobs, and explicitly racist supervisors refused to promote them even when they were qualified.[37] Confronting these realities, the new union demanded job security, "training programs at all levels of employment," and priority given to promotion from within.[38]

Finally, in the face of what they saw as administrative intransigence, many employees became convinced that the university's personnel approach needed wholesale reform. In place of the paternalistic public household of old, the union argued for "objective," fair, and regular standards.[39] When the administration made concessions on forty-hour weeks or regular weekends off, those changes were usually marked by what employees saw as

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[35] "Union Demands Paid Training," *We the People*, Nov. 17, 1967, 4, Unions Reference Collection.

[36] See Chapter 2.

[37] "Union Demands Paid Training," *We the People*, Nov. 17, 1967, 4, Unions Reference Collection; Mrs. Iola Woods, "Arbitrary pay Standards," *The Crisis On Our Campus*, Box 7, VP Records.

[38] "Union Demands Paid Training," *We the People*, Nov. 17, 1967, 4, Unions Reference Collection.

[39] "A Collective Voice," *The Real World*, Feb. 25, 1966, Box 27, Sara Evans Papers, DU Archives. Duke was not unusual in retaining a very informal personnel structure that left many service workers uncertain about their status. A major hospital in New York did not have a personnel department until 1959. See Leon Fink and Brian Greenberg, *Upheaval in the Quiet Zone: 1199SEIU and the Politics of Health Care Unionism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 92.

unnecessary delays.[40] The university produced its first employee handbook in 1962. But employees still felt that certain personnel policies remained unclear and irregularly enforced. Even if "there was no official policy of discrimination and humiliation," the university continued to hire "some local rednecks in supervisory positions" who were empowered to "exercise complete control over [them]."[41] Moreover, they were not allowed to verify their own job descriptions or performance reviews.[42] Personal assurances and individual promotions, though appreciated, were not going to be enough to "convince employees" that any measure of fairness governed employee relations on campus.[43] Employees needed major changes like formal arbitration and collective bargaining.

Employee demands for respect undergirded the drive for more formal employee relations systems. They wanted to be treated as "human being[s]" with "dignity" and "the right to play a role" in their own working lives.[44] An editorial by dining hall worker and union member Myrtyle Washington succinctly demonstrated how ideas about discrimination and empowerment melded with material demands to form the union's program. "Our white bosses" kept "pushing us deeper into the pits of hell day by day," she said, and employees were supposed to just "keep bowing down and kissing boots." But the union had taught them that "we can't eat a pat on the back" and empowered them to demand changes.[45]

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[40] "History of Local 77," *The Crisis On Our Campus*, Box 7, VP Records.

[41] "Brief History of Duke Employees Local 77," typed manuscript, Don Roy Papers, DU Archives.

[42] Bob Wise, "Employee Grievance Denied," *The Duke Chronicle*, Feb. 2, 1967.

[43] Duke Employees Local 77 to Faculty Friends of Local 77, Apr. 11, 1966, Box 32, Divinity School Records, DU Archives.

[44] "History of Local 77," *The Crisis On Our Campus*, Box 7, VP Records; "In Loco Parentis for Duke Employees?," Flyer, Box 14, Theodore Minah Records, DU Archives.

[45] Myrtle Washington, "Editorial," *We the People*, May 23, 1966, Unions Reference Collection.

To make their case, employees effectively inverted the benevolent self-perception of Duke's administrators and students, accusing the university's management of perpetrating a grave moral injustice and a violation of its own mission. Denied the ability "to provide for our families even the basic necessities of life," employees deserved "both a living wage and a fair return for the service they provide the University."[46] Duke's administrators claimed it was "the leading educational institution in the South" and spoke with "pride not only [of] its academic leadership but also [of] its moral leadership."[47] Those claims made it "ironic that the conditions under which we labor" were so harsh and the university's leadership so uncompromising.[48] "Duke [had] a moral responsibility to do what is right," yet had failed in every way to live up to its vaunted status.[49]

At the heart of all of their activism, employees linked racial justice to campus reform, laying bear the sinister nature of Duke's labor regime. To give lie to the "impression of employer benevolence," activists inverted the university's discourse about the 'household' and turned to their own familiar metaphor: the "plantation."[50] Echoing black freedom fighters in Memphis and elsewhere, they sought to combat what they saw as the internalized fear and

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[46] [No Signature] to H. Franklin Browers, February 12, 1965, Box 36, Women's College Records; Oliver Harvey, "Working Together Toward Common Goals," *The Duke Chronicle*, Dec. 3, 1966, 5.

[47] [No Signature] to H. Franklin Browers, February 12, 1965, Box 36, Women's College Records.

[48] Ibid.

[49] McKissick to Dozier, May 29, 1965, Box 32, Knight Records.

[50] "History of Local 77," *The Crisis on our campus*, Box 7, VP Records; "Insulted Cafeteria Worker Gets Apology," *We the People,* Mar. 17, 1966, Box 28, Knight Records. For the use of plantation or slavery imagery in other union campaigns in the 1960s, see Laurie Green, *Battling the Plantation Mentality: Memphis and the Black Freedom Struggle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2007), chapters 8 and 9; J. Derek Williams, "'It Wasn't Slavery Time Anymore': Foodworkers' Strike At Chapel Hill, Spring 1969 (master's thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1979); Leon Fink and Brian Greenberg, *Upheaval in the Quiet Zone: 1199SEIU and the Politics of Health Care Unionism*, 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 129-158; Gregg Michel, "'Union Power, Soul Power': Unionizing Johns Hopkins University Hospital, 1959-1974," *Labor History* 38, no. 1 (Dec. 1996): 28-66.

servility among black workers themselves that characterized the "plantation mentality."[51] For instance, Harvey liked to remind workers that "you and your family don't reside at Duke," invoking their independent community.[52] However, their protests always remained as much about labor relations as they were about attitudes, aimed as much at dismantling an exploitative system as they were at generating self-reflection. Invoking the metaphor of the plantation in conversation and published communications, union activists described a system of labor relations wherein employers off-loaded the back-breaking and comfort-making labors necessary to create and enjoy the markers of the affluent class.

Fearful of the power of civil rights organizing, administrators harshly rejected workers' claims of racial injustice. In an early exchange with local civil rights attorney and union spokesperson Floyd McKissick, President Douglas Knight strenuously contested accusations of racial profiling.[53] McKissick noted that African Americans were concentrated in the lowest-paying and most physically strenuous jobs. Furthermore, McKissick specifically termed this treatment "discriminatory," implicitly raising the threat of legal action.[54] Citing a statistic that he would return to often, Knight called McKissick's claim "neither accurate nor just" and noted that the "non-academic" workforce was sixty percent white.[55] Knight's statistics about the "non-academic workforce" sought to obscure the links

[51] See Green, *Battling the Plantation Mentality*. Though Green is attentive to the ways workers sought to attack the *system*, her emphasis is on the process of internal awakening and politicization – the *mentality*.

[52] Oliver Harvey, "Editorial," We the People, Mar. 17, 1966, Box 28, Knight Records.

[53] Knight served as president from 1964 to 1969. Almost immediately upon Knight's ascensions to that role, he was confronted by the union's formal organizing.

[54] McKissick to Knight, Apr. 6, 1965, Box 28, Knight Records.

[55] Knight to McKissick, Apr. 22, 1965, Box 28, Knight Records.

between race and low-wage *service* workers and shift the rhetorical terrain away from civil rights. The university's own records put the racial makeup of the service sector at eighty-six percent black. In contrast, clerical workers were .8 percent black.[56] Instead, Knight argued that the racial divide resulted from differences in education, not "racial difference, per se."[57] Given those facts, he argued, casting the plight of non-academic workers in racial terms was a "profoundly unfortunate […] attempt to place us in a defensive position."[58] By pointing to long and continuing patterns of discrimination, the union hoped to leverage the recent legal victories of the civil rights movement. In response, Knight framed the link between race and labor as incidental and, at worse, historical.

Despite Knight's denials, others within the university community recognized the racial dimension of Duke's labor problems, effectively agreeing with union organizers' position. Former students and concerned faculty members told stories about particular workers whose dismal job prospects reflected their degraded racial status rather than their capabilities. They wrote plaintive letters to Knight conveying personal and wrenching stories of "close personal friend[s]" who faced considerable discrimination and janitors without enough money to eat.[59] Students observed that several of the black maids who cleaned their rooms were college-educated.[60] Unable to find more suitable work either at Duke or in

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[56] John Dozier, Business Manager, "Employment Statistics," Apr. 1964, Box 6, Knight Records.

[57] Knight to McKissick, Apr. 26, 1965, Box 28, Knight Records.

[58] Knight to McKissick, Apr. 22, 1965, Box 28, Knight Records.

[59] John Strange, Instructor of Politics at Princeton, to Knight, Mar. 3, 1965, Box 28, Knight Records.

[60] "Duke CORE Report regarding discrimination and unfair employment," n.d., Box 6, Knight Records.

Durham, these women now returned to a college campus not as students but as service workers.

The union also attracted the vital support of outspoken members of the university's faculty and student body in the mid-1960s. Students active in established New Left organizations joined the organizing efforts, distributing union literature and offering carpools to meetings.[61] Political science faculty member, John Strange, an early advocate for employees while a student at Duke years before, was especially vocal in support of the union's efforts to achieve better working conditions.[62] Under the executive editorship of Alan Ray, the student newspaper, *The Chronicle*, offered robust and sympathetic coverage of ongoing labor conflicts, covering the protests and aims of the growing union, and offering explicit support in editorials.[63]

These faculty and student advocates echoed union claims about the stakes of the conflict, about racial justice, and about the university's own mission. Advocating collective bargaining, they argued that the "only way employees can know where they stand at Duke is if they have a binding agreement."[64] Student and faculty supporters were particularly vocal when it came to arguments about the nature of Duke and its responsibilities, accusing the

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[61] "Students Rally for Arbitration," *The Duke Chronicle*, Apr. 20 1967; Douglas Broyles, "The Student and the Unions," *We the People*, Apr. 27, 1966. For New Left traditions at Duke, see Green, *Our Separate Ways*, 76, 79-82, 143-151; Robert Korstad and Jim Leloudis, *To Right These Wrongs: the North Carolina Fund and the Battle to End Poverty and Inequality in 1960s America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 319-320.

[62] This is the same John Strange who wrote about his friendship with a janitor, almost certainly Oliver Harvey. For Strange's commitment to the cause first as a graduate student and then as a returned faculty, see John Strange and Scott Stevens, "Maids Sweep in Weekly Pay of $19.50," *The Duke Chronicle*, Mar. 6, 1959.

[63] Knight and other administrators even frequently lamented the slanted coverage of labor conflict by the paper. Knight to Joe Arpad, Feb. 20, 1969, Box 32, Knight Records.

[64] News Bulletin, Duke Employees Local Union 77, May 11, 1966, Box 27, Evans Papers.

university of having not "lived up to one of its own purposes."[65] Given the racial dimensions of the fight, this failure was particularly troubling, and risked calling into question "the integrity of Duke as a leader in liberal and responsible education in the South."[66] In 1967, two hundred employees, faculty and students picketed together in protest of the university's personnel policies. Like Myrtle Washington's earlier editorial, the protest literature linked together some of the union's specific demands, its ideas about democratic participation, and its still broader claims about morality: employees had "no job security, no dignity, no chance of becoming […] members with rights and obligations rather than pawns of this institution to be used and discarded."[67] In articles in the student paper, in correspondence with school administrators, and in hallways on campus and churches throughout the city, mostly white students and mostly black service workers together created spaces for intense deliberation about the nature of race and labor at Duke and the exercise of authority on college campuses.

It is important to note that, for the most part, broad student and faculty interest in early organizing drives remained intermittent and often infused with paternalism. Some students "appear[ed] to feel sorry for the 'overworked' maids," but such concern rarely reached past platitudes in surveys, and others were vocal in their opposition to employee organizing.[68] Even some expressions of solidarity suggested the delicate position of black workers on campus. Administrators easily short-circuited critical conversations when faculty

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[65] Brie Paisley to Knight, Apr. 24, 1967, Box 28, Knight Records.

[66] Robert Osborn to Knight, Apr. 12, 1966, Box 28, Knight Records.

[67] "Students Rally for Arbitration," *The Duke Chronicle*, Apr. 20, 1967, 1.

[68] Housing Bureau to Huestis, Memorandum, Dec. 19, 1966, Box 5, VP Records. For student opposition, see F.W. Pasotto, "The Loyal Opposition. – 3 Strikes," *The Duke Chronicle*, May 18, 1966 and Donald Edgerton, "Letter to the Editor: Maids: He Differs," *The Duke Chronicle*, Apr. 19, 1963.

or alumni expressed their concerns through the lens of personal injustices rather than systematic problems. President Knight answered a letter about an alumnus's friendship with a janitor by asking the employee's name, asserting that they had been "looking hard, honestly and for some time in the hope of finding men who could carry responsible supervisory jobs."[69] Moreover, these personal stories, though deeply felt and rhetorically powerful, could easily shade into paternalism. When a personal plea secured a janitor named Jesse a new job and a raise, the Dean of the Medical School, Wilbur Davison, expressed his particular gratitude "for the arrangements because Jesse and I have been friends for years."[70] Knight and other administrators were far more willing to pursue the promotion of a particular janitor than to examine the university's decades-long system of racial hiring. It was this piece-meal and paternalistic approach to making concessions that employees hoped to defeat through appeals to systematic reform.

Still, for administrators, the union's success in attracting even limited student and faculty support threatened to challenge the fundamental structures of authority in the knowledge economy. In response, President Knight countered moralistic arguments with appeals to budgetary and fiscal responsibility, which he used to pit the needs of students and faculty against those of other employees. Service workers were not the most downtrodden among the university's constituencies - there were a "good many men [administrators] who work an eighty hour week though they are not paid to do it," Knight argued. [71] Neither were they the most important. Since maids and janitors made up "only a small percentage" of all

[69] Knight to Strange, Mar. 11, 1965, Box 28, Knight Records.

[70] Wilbur Davison, Dean of the Medical School, to Richard Bindewald, Personnel Director, July 10, 1965, Box 20, Wilburt Davison Records, Duke University Medical Center Archives.

[71] Knight to Brainerd Currie, Professor of Law, Mar. 8, 1965, Box 28, Knight Records.

employees, Knight argued, it only made sense that reforms be pursued with caution and "without jeopardizing other aspects of the University."[72] He was particularly dismissive of petitions, a common tactic by employees and their allies, which he framed as a dangerous mutation of proper intellectual and individual discourses.[73] In his view, the union was "far less noble" than its sympathizers would suggest, pursuing "not [a course] of justice but of force."[74] Union advocates needed to be reminded "that the university serves students, the sick, and the public."[75] It was to this higher, more legitimate calling that Knight must answer.

At times, Knight simply sought to invalidate service employees' right to make demands of the university at all. In Knight's telling, Duke's service workers were not members of the university community but beneficiaries of its generosity. As such, they were not entitled to negotiate as equals with members of the administration. Knight suggested that to raise the minimum wage would be to endanger the jobs of many black employees who "honestly were not competent to earn" more than eighty-five cents an hour and "could not be educated to this level no matter how much time or money we had available."[76] In fact, according to Knight, the administration was saving its employees from welfare, where they would otherwise find themselves if denied the gift of a job at Duke. The university was thus doing a public service, sparing its black workers the indignity of charity and the Durham

[72] Knight to Judith Burns, May 24, 1965 and Knight to Frederick Adams, Mar. 23, 1965, Box 28, Knight Records.

[73] Knight to Judith Burns, May 24, 1965, Box 28, Knight Records; Knight to N. Patrick Murray, May 30, 1966, Box 16, Knight Records.

[74] Knight to Robert Osborn, Apr. 12, 1966 and Knight to Murray, May 30, 1966, Box 28, Knight Records.

[75] "Dear ___," form letter draft, Aug. 15, 1959, Box 42, Edens Records.

[76] Knight to Strange, Mar. 11, 1965 and Knight to Frederick Andrews, Mar. 23, 1965, Box 28, Knight Records.

community the cost of caring for them. This was a "great moral burden" for Duke, one the university was graciously willing to fulfill.[77]

This particular defense betrayed the continued power of paternalistic thinking among top administrators, and the resentment that they felt when their authority was questioned. Knight's replies to letters from critics frequently and palpably betrayed his offense, frustration, and contempt at being questioned.[78] For instance, he accused one professor of acting in "bad faith" in alleging misconduct on the part of the university.[79] In another case, despite attempts to "moderate" his emotions, his response to a former student overflowed with scorn and disbelief: given that his correspondent was such an "educated" and "sophisticated" man, Knight asked how it was possible for him to completely miss the "distinctions between justice and propaganda."[80] In Knight's mind, the university could offer "any employee more protection than a formal [labor] organization would do."[81] Posing the university as benevolent patriarch, Knight clung to a personnel approach in keeping with the university's long-standing attitude towards its service employees and in line with other employers in the region's history.[82] At the same time, Knight's self-professed status as "a

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[77] Knight to Strange, Mar. 11, 1965, Box 28, Knight Records.

[78] Knight to Mr. N. Patrick Murray, Assistant Coordinator of Religious Affairs, The University of Michigan May 6, 1966, Box 16, Knight Records.

[79] Knight to Professor R. Bruce Nicklas, Apr. 25, 1966, Box 16, Knight Records.

[80] Knight to N. Patrick Murray, May 6, 1966, Box 16, Knight Records.

[81] Knight to Professor R. Bruce Nicklas, Apr. 25, 1966, Box 28, Knight Records.

[82] See chapter 2. For importance of paternalism in the South's economic development, see Jacqueline Dowd Hall et al., *Like a Family: The Making of a Cotton Mill World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Timothy W. Vanderburg, *Cannon Mills and Kannapolis: Persistent Paternalism in a Textile Town* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2013); Dolores Janiewski, *Sisterhood Denied: Race, Gender, and Class in a New South Community* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1985), 67-94. Dowd Hall et. al. emphasize, quite rightly, that the south's 'paternalism' resembled welfare capitalism more broadly. For the persistence of welfare capitalism into the mid-20th century, see Sanford Jacoby, *Modern Manors: Welfare Capitalism Since the New Deal* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

new Southerner" suggested that his own perception of administrative authority coexisted well with the paternalism of Duke's public household model for service labor.[83]

Slowly and with great effort, employee organizers like Oliver Harvey succeeded in bringing the energy of local civil rights organizing to Duke and prompted penetrating debates about the nature of work and authority on campus. Arrayed on one side were employees and their supporters, who protested the material conditions of their lives, lambasted the rampant discrimination that denied them dignity and respect, and articulated what they saw as a fundamental hypocrisy at the heart of the knowledge economy. On the other, administrators made small concessions on particular policies but steadfastly resisted all efforts to curb their authority or question the special nature of the institution.

FEEDING DISCONTENT: THE PROMISE AND PERILS OF 'EFFICIENCY'

Despite Knight's best attempts to parry his critics' arguments, sustained employee action and intermittent student interest finally forced the administration to respond to their demands in the mid-1960s. In considering how the administration should proceed as it faced what he called "one of the most important decisions this fall," economics faculty member, and Knight confidante, Frank DeVyver surveyed three options: repression, recognition, and reconciliation.[84] The university's Board of Trustees was composed primarily of executives from several famously and vigorously anti-union North Carolina industries, which ultimately served as a powerful disincentive to recognizing the union.[85] The question Duke's administration faced then was how to answer some of its employee's most significant

[83] Knight to Frederick Andrews, Mar. 23, 1965, Box 16, Knight Records.

[84] Frank De Vyver to Knight, memorandum, Oct. 5, 1965, Box 28, Knight Records.

[85] "Two of the largest non-union groups are represented upon our Board." Ibid.

concerns enough to ease discontent without appearing to recognize their right to organize. Thus, administrators sought out a third path, familiar to many anti-union businesses in the South, between recognition and outright repression.[86]

In line with this mildly conciliatory tack, university administrators made a number of attempts to address the culture of dissatisfaction among employees. Henry Rauch, the President of Burlington Industries and member of Duke's Board of Trustees, took a personal interest in campus labor relations and largely set the tone of these reforms. While advocating a more "modern" approach to personnel, Rauch continued to emphasize the personal nature of authority. After his staff's initial report came back critical of the "absence of warmth" at Duke, Rauch recommended the development of a "'new and improved image'" through "non-economic fringe benefits" like children's Christmas parties to increase "productivity."[87] Knight began to attend dining hall orientations and custodial training classes in order to "give more prestige, status, and 'feelings of belonging,' especially in the case of those groups of employees who have given some evidence of restive and discontent."[88] In case any clarification was needed, Personnel Director Richard Bindewald amended one invitation to such a ceremony with the handwritten note that "these are all colored maids and janitors," who he claimed would "be immensely flattered and impressed" with Knight's attendance.[89]

However, many of these purportedly innovative reforms remained cosmetic in nature, aimed at convincing employees to feel differently about their experiences, rather than

[86] Ibid.

[87] Henry Rauch to Knight, Personal and Confidential, Nov. 26, 1965, Box 5, Knight Records.

[88] Bindewald to Knight, May 10, 1967, Box 5, Knight Records.

[89] Ibid.

changing those experiences. Heeding Rauch's warning that "employees by nature want to feel 'important'" and diagnosing a "real need for communicating within the family," administrators launched a number of internal publicity initiatives.[90] Administrators were particularly keen to broadcast several recent promotions of black workers, including orderlies, dormitory maids, janitors and "Negro helpers [now] often used for cashier work in the dining halls."[91] Administrators themselves acknowledged that the new publicity campaign sought to make employees "sure of the facts" about their jobs so that they might "properly evaluate" the claims of the union.[92] Many employees active in the union saw such measures as barely-concealed propaganda.

The one significant program that administrators did launch to "modernize" the employee function at Duke focused on tightening control of the labor process but ended up merely sharpening the stakes of campus labor conflict further by exacerbating employee discontent. In exchange for agreeing to a wage raise for the university's lowest-paid employees in 1965, the Board of Trustees demanded that the university solicit an "efficiency study" that would identify areas "where economies might be effected and University funds recovered."[93] After all, wage increases for the hundreds of employees toiling in the cafeterias, hallways, and patient rooms might endanger the carefully laid plans for university

[90] Rauch to Knight, Nov. 26, 1965, Box 5, Knight Records; Bindewald to Knight, Mar. 7, 1966, Box 28, Knight Records.

[91] Henrickson to Knight, Mar. 11, 1965, Box 28, Knight Records.

[92] John Dozier, "Memorandum to All Non-Academic Employees," Dec. 13, 1965, Box 9, Business Division Records.

[93] "Minutes of a meeting between Library Council and Alexander Proudfoot Company representatives," May 12, 1967, Box 7, VP Records.

growth.[94] For trustees like Henry Rauch, the obvious remedy for this unwelcome intrusion was to find ways to "cut out waste."[95] From among the four proposals submitted to Duke, the Board selected that of the Alexander Proudfoot Company.[96]

While the businessmen who made up the university's Board of Trustees saw the study as an obvious solution, many among the university's faculty and staff were suspicious of the Proudfoot project's methods, and its application to a university setting. University officials were forced to strenuously deny the accusation that Proudfoot represented a "time and motion study."[97] If not a time and motion study of old, the Proudfoot system nevertheless bore the legacy of those earlier attempts to manage workers' most minute movements. At the conclusion of their time in a department, Proudfoot reimagined the work done there as a series of small, routine tasks, each expected to take only a limited number of minutes to perform, and redistributed it across the department's staff.

Whether due to the timing or nature of the Proudfoot study, the administration got less in cost savings and more in trouble than it bargained for. In every case, the Proudfoot plan called for what seemed to many employees and supervisors to be a staggering number of cuts: three thousand workhours a week in housekeeping, and ten to twelve positions in

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[94] "Minutes of the University Policy and Planning Advisory Committee," Nov. 16, 1966, 1, Box 9, VP Records.

[95] "Minutes of the University Policy and Planning Advisory Committee," Nov. 16, 1966, 2, Box 9, VP Records.

[96] Henrickson to Knight, Apr. 4, 1966, Box 5, Knight Records. Other colleges, too, were turning to management consultant firms that tended to advocate large cuts to their staffing. See Christopher McKenna, *The World's Newest Profession: Management Consulting in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 111-123.

[97] "Minutes of a meeting between Library Council and Alexander Proudfoot Company representatives," May 12, 1967, Box 7, VP Records. No one seems to have noted the similarities to the 'idle time division' report commissioned by the dining halls almost twenty years before. For the attempt to institute time-and-motion studies in the Southern textile industry, see Dowd Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 203-220. For the leftist, midcentury critique of scientific management, see Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century*, 25th anniversary edition (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1998), 60-63, 77-94, 119-123, 175-6.

medical records, for instance.[98] But workers across Duke's campuses strenuously objected to the "work schedule" changes. The struggles over the Proudfoot system risked exposing the racial and gendered thinking that undergirded Duke's labor hierarchies, by revealing the fundamentally different ways in which administrators and employees envisioned "modern" labor relations. Ultimately, employee activists in the university's service departments were able to capitalize on the resentment towards Proudfoot to advance their organizing efforts and erode the legitimacy of administrators' authority even further.

For the university's service workers, Proudfoot "efficiency" translated into harsh discipline and overwork. The suggested Proudfoot system in college housekeeping required the maids and janitors to do the same amount of cleaning in thirty percent less time. Maids criticized the "excessive work loads [sic]" this new system required.[99] Estimating that it took "18-20 minutes" to clean each bedroom, Manager of Operations H.F. Bowers had previously suggested increasing the maid's workloads to "20-23 bedrooms" a day in March of 1966. At the time, maids harshly criticized Bowers' estimates. Four months later, Proudfoot's plan now demanded they clean as many as thirty-three a day.[100] The earlier labor activism of many of these workers had sought to correct what they saw as tyrannical exercises of power, but Proudfoot's tactics threatened to institutionalize tyranny by masquerading it as efficiency.

Resistance to Proudfoot was widespread in all the service departments, but dormitory maids took the lead in resisting the new schedules. This leadership role reflected their

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[98] Banks to Bennett, June 30, 1967, and Banks to Huestis, May 11, 1967, Box 7, VP Records.

[99] *We the People* 2, No. 3 (Mar. 13, 1967), Box 8, Theodore Minah Records, DU Archives.

[100] Bowers to John Dozier, "Proposal for Reduction of Operational Expenses, Duke University Men's Residence Halls," Mar. 1, 1966, Box 28, Office of the University Treasurer Records; White, "Non-Academic Employees Reject Work Rescheduling."

significant position within the union's rank-and-file, and their recent prominence in successful work actions before Proudfoot. Maids worked in close physical proximity to students, and some had learned how to transform student "affection" for them into job security.[101] In the 1960s, they began to use that status to support unionization and collective action. For instance, when forty West Campus dormitory maids walked out on strike in 1965 to protest being assigned "the daily scrubbing of men's showers with heavy detergents and steel wool," work previously done by men, they attracted the attention of campus leftists.[102] When the housekeeping department began implementing the new Proudfoot system, forty-two maids filed a joint grievance with the administration. Though the university's leadership refused to address their grievance, union member and maid Iola Woods and union president Oliver Harvey went to the Women's Student Government Association and "told the girls about the unfair work-loads that cannot be completed without a severe loss in the quality of work."[103] Hoping to demonstrate what they saw as the harshness of the schedule, Woods and Harvey had interested students attempt Woods' work and widely publicized the episode when they "did not come close to finishing."[104] Even though Woods lost her grievance, her strategic actions significantly shaped the campus debate about the Proudfoot system.

While service workers critiqued the exacting nature of Proudfoot's schedules, employees across the university's campuses questioned the social costs of the program more

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[101] See Chapter 2.

[102] Sarah Evans, "Labor's Challenge to Duke," *The Real World*, Nov. 17, 1965.

[103] "Faculty, Students Show Continuing Support," *We the People*, Dec. 1967, Roy Papers.

[104] Helen Washington/Oliver Harvey to Henrickson, Mar. 28, 1967, Box 13, VP Records; See *We the People*, Mar. 1967, Box 8, Minah Records; "Employees Local 77 Demands Impartial Grievance Arbitration," *The Duke Chronicle*, Apr. 6, 1967.

broadly. Dining hall managers reported that employees felt "insecure," that "they had no identity and were merely being treated as a letter."[105] Maids complained that Proudfoot schedulers were "standing over people, watching them like criminals."[106] Complaints about the new program even trickled in from unexpected quarters.[107] The Dean of the Law School worried that the work efficiency program, if implemented as suggested, "would have a dehumanizing effect" by giving the department "the atmosphere of a 'sweat shop.'"[108] Like textile workers earlier exposed to time and motion studies, employees at Duke rejected Proudfoot as an attempt to "harness" workers' movements "to the company ledger."[109] They resented both the harshness of the new labor regime and the way it envisioned them as cogs in a machine.

Proudfoot's struggle with Duke's clerical workers underlined their simultaneously liminal and privileged status on campus. White women made up the vast majority of clerical, and technical workers, and their relative educational advantage and racial privilege previously afforded them certain comforts at work.[110] In exchange for the sometimes thankless and monotonous nature of their jobs, they treasured the autonomy and dignity they had secured for themselves and deeply resented the close monitoring suggested by

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[105] Theodore Minah, Director of Dining Hall, to George Kantner, Coordinator, Work Scheduling Program, Apr. 12, 1967, Box 7, VP Records.

[106] Vicky White, "Non-Academic Employees Reject Work Rescheduling," *The Duke Chronicle*, 1, Oct. 20, 1966.

[107] In the hospital, secretaries themselves supposedly undertook a war of attrition against the interlopers, slamming doors into their clipboards and falling silent when they approached. Karen Sacks, *Caring by the Hour: Women, Work, and Organizing at Duke Medical Center* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 48.

[108] F. Hodge O'Neal to DeVyver, Mar. 15, 1967, Box 5, Knight Records.

[109] Dowd Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 209.

[110] See Chapter 2.

Proudfoot.[111] When Proudfoot alleged that the library staff was wasting fifty percent of their time in "idle gossip: discussing clothes, weather, and so on," the firm twisted the precious benefits of professional status into a gendered critique of the female staff's competence.[112] Elsewhere, Proudfoot schedulers attributed problems to gendered disorder – blaming a lack of the "proper spirit" among "a few of the girls" to the fact that they had "gone too long without strong male supervision."[113] As clerical workers began threatening to leave over their treatment by Proudfoot, department chairs took up their cause with gusto, claiming that "the office staff is intimately tied in with our education program."[114] Faculty members were more inclined to see the work of clerical employees as part of the intellectual side of the university because that work was indispensable to the academics themselves. Even administrators did not seem particularly keen on pressing the issue – they had only begun incorporating clerical and technical departments to avoid the appearance that they were singling out service and maintenance departments, "where we have the greatest union activity."[115] To a certain extent, Proudfoot's gendered critique of clerical workers was stymied by their close and oftentimes personal associations with the university's faculty and professional staff.

Pressed to defend the service workers under their supervision, managers in the services also betrayed the racial and gendered dynamics structuring the campus labor

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[111] Earlier attempts to "rationalize" clerical work had bumped up against resistance among clerical workers. See Margery Davis, *Woman's Place is at the Typewriter: Office Work and Office Workers, 1870-1930* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982); and Margaret Hedstrom, "Automating the Office: Technology and Skill in Women's Clerical Work, 1940-1970," (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, 1988).

[112] "Minutes of a meeting between Library Council and Alexander Proudfoot Company representatives," May 12, 1967, Box 7, VP Records.

[113] James Bennett, "Action Needed Report," Oct. 2, 1967, Box 9, VP Records.

[114] F. Hodge O'Neal to DeVyver, Mar. 15, 1967, Box 5, Knight Records.

[115] Henrickson to Knight, Sept. 12, 1966, Box 5, Knight Records.

hierarchy. An otherwise vocal advocate of work efficiency studies in the abstract, Dining Hall Director Ted Minah raised alarms about Proudfoot in response to employee insouciance.[116] But rather than echo employees' own critiques about being treated as criminals, Minah reached explicitly for the stereotype of the "mammy" to protest the tension the Proudfoot system was creating. The facility represented "the home situation" for more than one thousand female students, he said, and the Proudfoot scheduling system threatened to undermine the "intimate or delicate relationships" between students and employees.[117] Particularly for the female students "who come from high level homes" and who had developed the "same attachment to some of our employees that they have to their Negro friends back in their homes," any attempt to remake the character of the service relationship would undermine the emotional security and "home-feeling" they had on campus.[118] While some employees in the dining halls and dorm rooms may have forged meaningful connections with students, their activism increasingly rejected the unwelcome familiarity and racial paternalism he evoked.[119] Thus, Minah's decision to deploy centuries-old scripts of black and white womanhood to resist the university's new "modern" system also negated the claims of his black employees themselves.

Ultimately, Duke's experience with Proudfoot revealed both the promise and perils of efficiency for administrators and the yawning gulf between employees and administrators over how to modernize employee relations. Duke's administration argued that "efficiency"

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[116] See Chapter 2.

[117] Minah to Kantner, Apr. 12, 1967, Box 7, VP Records.

[118] Ibid.

[119] Here Minah is tightly "clinging to mammy." Micki McElya, *Clinging to Mammy: The Faithful Slave in Twentieth-Century America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

was the necessary and fair trade off for the wage raises already affected and any more to come. In an inversion of the century-old labor rallying cry, administrators called on employees to "give us a day's work for the pay they receive."[120] Instead of relaying employees' concerns about having a personal identity, complaining supervisors needed to "take a firm stand " and let "the employee IDENTIFY himself with work that he is expected to complete."[121] Proudfoot would root out the "inefficient" workers that burdened the system, like the painter who did not like to paint and the dishwasher who could not work quickly enough to be valued at $1.10/hr.[122] Unlike employees, who hoped that formalizing relations would ensure themselves respect, these administrators saw the wisdom of a modern system as a solution to problems with waste and inefficiency.

As a result of this clash of outlooks, the Proudfoot system yielded decidedly mixed results for Duke. While the system saved the university around one million dollars on the academic campus, administrators had to admitted to other universities and hospitals that Proudfoot had "perhaps [been] over confident." Though administrators largely agreed with the "accuracy of [Proudfoot's] analysis of work habits, they failed to consider the "particular service requirements" and the specific "prerogatives" of a university.[123] Most importantly, their attempt at modernizing the academic service workforce fanned the flames of worker discontent, enhanced the "ever present specter of Local 77," and "given the Union a

[120] "Concerning the Scheduling System on the East Campus in the Dining Halls," n.d., Box 7, VP Records.

[121] Ibid.

[122] "Vigil Writers are Surprising," *The Duke Chronicle*, May 1, 1968.

[123] Huestis to Mr. M.L. Blanchard, Associate Administrator, St. John's Hospital, May 27, 1970 and Huestis to Mr. B.D. Mateer, Assistant Vice President, Harris Trust and Savings Bank, Oct. 28, 1968, Box 7, VP Records.

whipping boy."[124] The system largely lost the battle for the hearts and minds of the university's workforce. Pressed by employee demands for better wages and working conditions, Duke's administrators undertook a substantive project to modernize employee relations in line with their own priorities. But that project did not end up satisfying administrators or employees. Instead of yearly savings and a more streamlined labor force, they got heightened tensions and daily acts of resistance.

A Shooting, A Strike, and a Silent Vigil

Employee activists had made considerable progress in organizing among service workers before the Proudfoot episode. They succeeded in integrating the unrest around Proudfoot into those preexisting critiques of the injustices and inequities embedded in the university's labor situation. As one administrator complained, the union used the dissatisfactions with the Proudfoot system to "call the justice" of the university's entire "system into question."[125] Throughout 1966 and 1967, Local 77 used day-long walkouts by hospital housekeepers and data operators, periodic petition drives, and coordinated grievances to maintain pressure on university officials, winning a series of important but ad-hoc concessions on the university's personnel management program.[126]

Union organizers proved particularly adept at publicizing adverse personnel decisions to audiences primed by the Proudfoot controversies, and using them to demonstrate the

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[124] Minah to Kantner, Apr. 12, 1967, Box 7, VP Records; "Minutes from Business Meeting," Feb. 14, 1968, Box 9, Minah Records.

[125] Knight to Bindewald, Henricksen, and Huestis, memorandum, Apr. 3, 1967, Box 28, Knight Records.

[126] See, for instance, Betty Walbond, "Local 77 Pickets Allen Building," *The Duke Chronicle*, Apr. 14, 1967; Aramita Stone, "WSGA and Local 77 to Investigate Wages," *The Duke Chronicle*, Dec. 13, 1967; "Editorial: A Fair Work Week," The *Duke Chronicle*, Feb. 9, 1958; "Ralph, a PCA gave this to evening supervisor," handwritten note on printed schedule of events, Box 13, VP Records.

failures of the administration to truly reform labor relations. Two women in particular became central to these efforts. The first, Hattie Williams, was a seven-year employee of the dining halls and union member who was fired without cause after a period of anti-union harassment by dining director Minah. Like Oliver Harvey, Williams had worked at the American Tobacco Company and even had experience with unions there, but lost her job to automation in 1958. After learning of her sympathy to the union, a dietitian in the dining hall offered her a pay raise of nearly forty percent. She rejected the raise, and a short while later was let go from her work in the university's bakery. But Williams did not accept her fate quietly. She publicized her experience, and pressed forward with a grievance.[127] Incensed by her defiance, supervisors in the dining hall swore she "will never work here again."[128] Yet, administrators bowed to the union's pressure. Though offered "no explanation," Williams won reinstatement.[129] To add insult to injury for the dining hall management, an observer noted that this victory seemed to "put the Union in a position of power in everyone's eyes."[130] Moreover, Williams continued to struggle with Minah for years over what she felt were retaliatory job assignments, keeping both her mistreatment and her triumph on the pages of the union newsletters.

Shirley Ramsey's experiences attracted even more uproar from students, faculty, and other employees and demonstrated the feelings of empowerment taking hold among the university's service workers. At 22, Ramsey was one of the first black women to be assigned

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[127] "Untitled Flyer," n.d., Box 27, Evans Papers; see also Erik Ludwig, "Closing in on the 'Plantation': Coalition Building and the Role of Black Women's Grievances in Duke University Labor Disputes, 1965-1968," *Feminist Studies* 25, no. 1 (Spring 1999), 81.

[128] "History of Local 77," *The Crisis on our campus*, Box 7, VP Records.

[129] Ibid.

[130] "Brief History of Duke Employees Local 77," n.d., Roy Papers.

the job of cashier after pressure to desegregate the position from the union and local civil rights leaders.[131] Though young, Ramsey was already deeply involved in the union.[132] In 1966, after three years on the job, Ramsey was fired for creating "a situation of insubordination" by refusing "to follow [the] lawful and reasonable orders of her supervisors."[133] One day in May, Ramsey was ordered to "serve on the line" and "wash tables" when cashier work was slow, tasks that were never assigned to the white cashiers.[134] She complied that day. When pressed to do so again the very next day, however, she protested, alleging racial discrimination, and was promptly fired.[135] But Ramsey's work with the union had acquainted her with both the power of collective action and the resources that might be available to her. Calling on the local networks of black Durham, Ramsey presented her case to a meeting at the Walltown community center, originally founded by a member of the community who worked as a janitor at Duke. And a week after her firing, Ramsey filed a complaint with the EEOC.[136]

The dining hall management's response to Ramsey's complaint revealed once again the paternalistic nature of supervision at Duke and the intransigence of managers in the face of employee questions. The EEOC report later characterized Minah as being "enswathed in

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[131] Ludwig, "Closing in on the 'Plantation,'" 79-80.

[132] "Local 77 to elect nine trustees," *We the People*, May 23, 1966.

[133] Bindewald, Frenzel, and DeVyver to Henrickson, May 30, 1966, Box 27, Minah Records.

[134] Harry G. Boyte, EEOC Officer to Regional Director, "Re Ramsey vs. Duke University," Dec. 27, 1966, Box 27, Minah Records.

[135] Ibid.

[136] Shirley Ramsey, "Walltown Community Meeting," *We the People* 1, no. 4 (May 23, 1966), Unions Reference Collection.

bitterness and hostility towards Miss Ramsey."[137] Managers accused Ramsey of "frequently display[ing] an uncooperative attitude towards her 'superiors,'" reviving the stereotypical menace of uppity black women.[138] Minah alleged further that "the white cashiers do not know how to cut pies," a suggestion that the investigators swiftly dismissed as transparent and laughable.[139] Finally, Minah provided the investigator with a "list of Negro supervisors to indicate what the Dining Halls have done to improve the status of the Negro" and reminded the investigator that the supervisor who reassigned Ramsey (Mae Eaton) was herself black.[140]

By relying on the presence of several black supervisors as a defense of his department, Minah highlighted the complex role that race played in structuring the university's workforce. Minah would revisit this fact repeatedly in the years to come, with an insistence that suggests how important it had become to his own self-perception. Minah had indeed begun to promote black supervisors in the late 1950s, and black men had long filled positions of responsibility in the university's kitchens.[141] But, while union activists advocated opening avenues for promotion, they resented the tone of generosity with which Minah bestowed such promotions. They hated especially that the ploy sometimes worked. Leander Cornigans, the head chef, seems to have kept Minah abreast of the "news [about the Ramsey

[137] Harry G. Boyte, EEOC Officer to Regional Director, Dec. 27, 1966, Box 27, Minah Records.

[138] Ibid.

[139] "Decision," EEOC Case No. 6-7-6228, Ramsey vs. Duke University, Aug. 17, 1967, Box 27, Minah Records.

[140] Minah to Bob Rankin, Sept. 29, 1967, Box 27, Minah Records.

[141] See Chapter 2.

incident] being widely circulated in the Negro neighborhood."[142] The union newsletter frequently warned of black supervisors who were being "used as instruments of control and token indications of fairness," and who, after promotion, seemed to "have forgotten who they are."[143] They warned these supervisors not to trade racial solidarity for a few extra pennies: "remember, you will be a Negro forever; you will die a Negro."[144] Though these articles never named names, union leader and dining hall employee, Myrtle Washington, issued another pointed warning to those "weak enough to be conned" only a few weeks after the Ramsey incident.[145]

But while the union may have derided black supervisors for taking the side of management, Ramsey's EEOC case gave average workers the opportunity to denounce their status on campus. Black employees were eager to participate in the EEOC's investigation. The other black cashier, Nannie Burton, confirmed for the investigator that white cashiers had never been assigned serving duty, and, in fact, that no white employee had ever been hired for the service lines. Informants in the campus laundry and tailor shop likewise attested to a clear racial division of labor in their departments. Mae Jones revealed that she had been promoted to the role of supervisor in housekeeping the year prior, but had "never been given a Supervisor's pay rate" or title.[146] Backed by these employees' cooperation, the EEOC found Duke guilty of racial discrimination, demanded back pay for Ramsey, and required the

[142] Minah to Huestis, Sept. 14, 1967, Box 27, Minah Records.

[143] Duke Employees Local 77 to Faculty Friends of Local 77, Apr. 11, 1966, Box 32, Divinity School Records; "Editorial," *We the People* 1, no. 3 (Apr. 27, 1966), Box 16, Knight Records.

[144] "Editorial," *We the People* 1, no. 3 (Apr. 27, 1966), Box 16, Knight Records.

[145] Myrtle Washington, "editorial," *We the People* 1, no. 4 (May 23, 1966), Unions Reference Collection.

[146] Harry G. Boyte, EEOC Officer to Regional Director, Dec. 27, 1966, Box 27, Minah Records.

university to demonstrate a commitment to reform.[147] Ramsey's EEOC investigation taught employee activists that the power of the government could be used for their purposes. They would return to this lesson in the coming years.

In tackling the persistent problem of black employee discontent, administrators revisited the twin issues of wages and recognition. By early 1968, the union's concerted organizing work had begun to bear fruit across all segments of the university's black workforce. A confidential report on union activity that year noted large increases in activity and, far more seriously perhaps, "significant inroads" among new groups.[148] In February of 1968, hospital dietetics supervisor, Dorothy Tate, noted that fully seventy-five percent of her employees in food production belonged to the union.[149] Administrators' solution was a vague resolution to "counter [the union] by demonstrating that we are considering their personal dignity."[150] But they seem to have overestimated how much time they had on their hands. In March, the union began ramping up its activism. Drawing on the parlance of the day, they launched a "War on Poverty," challenging the university's claims to liberality and stating baldly that there was "no excuse that justifies wages below the level of poverty."[151] That same month, Hospital patient aids successfully executed a spontaneous two-day work stoppage to protest weekend staffing policies, with nearly ninety percent participating.[152]

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[147] "Decision," EEOC Case No. 6-7-6228, Ramsey vs. Duke University, Aug. 17, 1967, Box 27, Minah Records.

[148] "Minutes of Business Meeting," Feb. 14, 1968, Box 9, Minah Records.

[149] Dorothy Tate to Mr. Jennings, Feb. 14, 1968, Box 13, VP Records.

[150] "Minutes of Business Meeting," Feb. 14, 1968, Box 9, Minah Records.

[151] "Duke Workers Declare: War on Poverty," flyer, Box 7, VP Records.

[152] Carolyn Arnold, "Hospital Workers Strike," *The Duke Chronicle*, Apr. 3, 1968.

Knight was forced to write urgently to the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees to warn them that "campus organizing activity related to our nonacademic employees has intensified in recent weeks."[153] Indeed, the union's organizing strength was at a maximum, and they began preparing for large-scale work actions.

With each labor conflict, administrators and employees alike grew increasingly convinced that the university was a powder keg of discontent. Unionists used the steady drumbeat of provocations to embolden and recruit supporters among employees and students, growing their base of support quickly in the early months of 1968. On the administrative side, each department head was now required to monitor the "loyalty" of their employees and report weekly on the "interest" they found.[154] Managers mined "informants" about rumors of strike preparations and supervisors were required to submit emergency staffing plans to ensure continued service in the event of a walkout.[155] Knight and Huestis monitored these reports for any sign of increased activity, keeping the Board of Trustees and especially Rauch apprised of every incident, and then "destroy[ed]" the reports to avoid detection.[156]

In April 1968, an event of global historical proportion sped up action. When news of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination reached Duke's campus, grief and strategic thinking combined to strengthen the resolve of employees to launch a major work action. Making matters worse for administrators, an unprecedented number of students decided to join with

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[153] Knight to Gentlemen [Executive Committee of Board of Trustees], Mar. 22, 1968, Box 8, VP Records.

[154] See Howard to Huestis, Feb. 8, 1968, Box 6, VP Records (quotes); Dorothy Tate, Dietetics to Mr. Jennings, Feb. 14, 1968, Box 13, VP Records.

[155] "Ralph, a PCA gave this to evening supervisor," handwritten note on printed schedule of events, Box 13, VP Records; Bindewald to Huestis, Confidential, Dec. 7, 1967, Box 13, VP Records.

[156] DeVyver to Knight, Feb. 12, 1968, Box 16, Knight Records.

employees in demanding union recognition and labor reform. While other colleges confronted employee strikes or organizing drives, few had faced the coordinated actions of students and employees.[157] On the day of King's funeral, one hundred students first marched to President Knight's house in protest. A few hours later they moved to the quadrangle on campus, where they were eventually joined by hundreds more. Meanwhile, hundreds of black campus and hospital employees walked off the job.[158]

With parallel efforts, white students and black employees managed to halt campus life for four days and nights. Students camped out on the lawn in silent protest. Student leaders of what was called the "Silent Vigil" issued a series of demands, many of which echoed the language of the employees themselves. One flyer linked the "psychology of dependence" with low wages and urged the administration to "sign a contract as mutual, equal participants rather than dependents of a paternal employer with unilateral decision-making power."[159] Evoking a sense of collective shame, students came out in mass in support of the union's demands. Strike organizers were most successful in hitting the "hard core" labor hotbeds in the dining halls and housekeeping, reaching ninety percent effective rates.[160] Minah was dismayed to note that several recently-promoted black supervisors went on strike. Longtime union leader Myrtle Washington, the dish machine supervisor, and James Mayo,

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[157] Levy noted that students at the University of Missouri protested with non-academic workers in 1966. Levy, *New Left and Labor*, 242 (n34). At the University of North Carolina, the small but active black student association aided the strikers. Williams, "'It Wasn't Slavery Time Anymore.'" Otherwise, while many white student activists supported working-class actions, the work was usually off campus and involved small numbers of students.

[158] Coverage in *The Duke Chronicle*, Apr. 8, 1968.

[159] Untitled flyer, n.d., Box 8, VP Records.

[160] "Events immediately prior to and during the strike of the Dining Hall and Operations employees at Duke," typed report, n.d., Box 8, VP Records; Untitled flyer, n.d., Box 8, VP Records.

the head baker, even "took their employees with them" to the picket lines.[161] The striking workers won the support of several other local unions and neighborhood councils active in antipoverty efforts, many of whom joined the picket line in solidarity.[162]

The strike's success sometimes spoke as much to the density of community ties, and the pressure that could be exerted through those ties, as to total commitment among service workers. Prior to the events in April, supervisors in the dining hall kept in continuous contact with employees who they could "definitely count on" to remain on the job as they anticipated some kind of worker action.[163] Though not all of these employees proved their "loyalty" as expected, at least some remained on the job and continued to come into work.[164] But some employees unenthusiastic about the strike cowed to the weight of community "pressures exerted on them or their families."[165] Those employees not participating in the strike "received either telephone calls or visits" from those who were.[166] According to one dining hall supervisor, employees Catherine Bobbitt, Gladys Lawrence, and Juanita Bailey visited the homes of at least seven other women, using pressure, intimidation, and even "profane"

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[161] "Events immediately prior to and during the strike," Box 8, VP Records.

[162] Carolyn Arnold, "Local Unions Join Picketing," *The Duke Chronicle*, Apr. 19, 1968; Greene, *Our Separate Ways*, 114.

[163] "Duke University Dining Halls Emergency Feeding Plans," n.d., Box 9, VP Records.

[164] "Employees on Duty, April 9 thru April 14, 1968," Box 8, VP Records. These figures are a bit unclear because newspaper reports say that "all dining hall personnel except white supervisors have struck." "Police Say Duke Vigil No Trouble," *The Duke Chronicle*, Apr. 10, 1968.

[165] A number of supervisors noted that some people stayed out because of pressure they received from others at work and in their community. Though this claim might have been simply an easy excuse to a questioning boss, I think we must consider the possibility that it is true. Tera Hunter found community members willing to exert pressure on household workers in early 20th century Atlanta. Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors After the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

[166] "Events immediately prior to and during the strike," Box 8, VP Records.

language to entreat them to join the picket line.[167] While living and working in the same spaces did not ensure true political unanimity, employee activists leveraged those ties to induce cooperation.

As stunning as the vigil turnout was to outside observers, some members of the university community opposed and obstructed the protests that April. While it was not true that the majority of Duke students opposed the strike, as members of the administration tried to assure each other, some students did make their opposition clear.[168] Many student-employees in the dining halls continued to go to work during the strike, later arguing that they did so out of obligation to other students as well as out of solidarity with non-striking employees.[169] Still other students volunteered to work in the dining hall, saying they categorically opposed employee efforts to withhold service as a political statement.[170] And whereas some faculty voiced full-throated support of employee and student activists, they could not convince the faculty council to issue an official statement to that effect.[171] Several high level faculty even privately expressed their concern with what they termed the students' lack of "feeling of responsibility for the good and the wishes of the majority" in supporting union demands.[172]

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[167] "Notes for Remembering (M. Arline Smith)," Apr. 13, 1968, Box 46, Minah Records.

[168] "Letters from Readers: Mail Runs Against Vigil," *The Duke Chronicle*, Apr. 12, 1968; see also letters to the editor in Apr. 15, 1968 issue and Fern Haywood, "In Defense of the Scabs," *The Duke Chronicle*, Apr. 19, 1968.

[169] Fern Haywood, "In Defense of the Scabs," *The Duke Chronicle*, Apr. 19, 1968.

[170] Haywood, "In Defense of the Scabs."

[171] Richard Smurthwaite, "Four Day Silent Vigil Ends; Tacit Accord Reached," *The Duke Chronicle*, Apr. 11, 1968.

[172] J. Meriam, Dean of School of Engineering, to Knight, June 7, 1968, Box 10, VP Records.

Despite these challenges, the 1968 protests present a watershed moment in the history of labor at Duke because the vigil and strike scared administrators enough to extract concessions from the Board of Trustees. On the fourth day of the vigil, students received word that the Board was promising to establish a faculty-trustee committee to "study collective bargaining" for employees and institute new wage hikes.[173] After a contentious six-hour meeting, the students agreed to vacate the quad, though some would continue to participate in rallies and other vigil-related events for several weeks.[174] Stretching to two weeks, the strike tested the patience and drained the resources of employees further. Eventually, they, too, agreed to a temporary withdrawal, winning promises that a special committee "would work in good faith toward collective bargaining."[175] They would struggle for months to ensure that promise was kept. But even beyond significant, if vague, concessions from the Board of Trustees, the coordination of the vigil and strike helped to link a broader base of students, who had their own concerns about authority on campus, to employee demands for justice and autonomy. Whether their actions truly foretold a "New University," as one *Chronicle* editorial claimed, remained to be seen.[176]

CONCESSIONS AND REVERBERATIONS

The events of that April convinced Duke's administration that they needed to build on the movement towards a modern employee relations program prompted by employee

[173] Richard Smurthwaite, "Four Day Silent Vigil End; Tacit Accord Reached," *The Duke Chronicle*, Apr. 11, 1968.

[174] Richard Smurthwaite, "Four Day Silent Vigil Ends; Tacit Accord Reached by Protestors," *The Duke Chronicle*, April 11, 1968.

[175] Carolyn Arnold, "Workers return to work today; call 3 weeks moratorium on strike," *The Duke Chronicle*, April 22, 1968.

[176] "Editorial: The New University," *The Duke Chronicle*, Apr. 12, 1968.

pressure prior to 1968, but they did not fundamentally reshape their approach to such reforms. Even before the faculty-trustee committee that was convened after the vigil offered its formal recommendations, Huestis and members of the personnel department recommitted to a targeted, modern "communications program" as a panacea to "our recent union difficulties."[177] This program would control messaging both internally and externally. Some measures directly addressed the complaints of striking employees, notably the campus-wide publication of job openings to allow low-wage employees to apply for promotions. But others were more cynically aimed at "persuad[ing] the majority of our people that Duke can and does provide" all that employees needed.[178] Newsletters would feature human interest pieces and stories that related the "facts" of employment at a non-profit educational institution like Duke.[179] Explaining the university's pay scale in terms of its peculiar economic status was actually the central purpose of the internal communications program.

Administrators also built old inconsistencies and tensions into new programs. They continued to discuss the problem in terms of "loyalty" or its lack, holding fast to the tenets of the university as family.[180] Administrators maintained a sense that the university as an institution deserved an emotional commitment from its employees that stretched beyond the employment contract. As a result, administrators ultimately failed to devise a system of labor relations that could bridge the growing divide between the university and its employees.

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[177] Huestis to Mr. Charles Wade, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, Nov. 21, 1969, Box 7, VP Records; Bindewald to Minah, May 16, 1968, Box 9, Minah Records.

[178] "A Review of Duke's Relationship with its Nonacademic Employees," n.d., Box 100, Terry Sanford Records, DU Archives.

[179] "Labor Relations Status," report, Dec. 9, 1971, Box 26, VP Records.

[180] See, for instance, Howard to Huestis, July 17, 1969, Box 6, VP Records; Howard Lee, "PEP Proposal," Mar. 19, 1971, Box 4, A. Kenneth Pye Records; Linke to Robert Tuthill, Dec. 8, 1969, Box 7, VP Records; Minah to Huestis, memorandum, Feb. 24, 1969, Box 10, VP Records.

Employees still had a duty to serve, even if that duty was no longer explicitly tied to racial hierarchy.

When administrators finally acknowledged the need to address racial hiring and promotional patterns, employees often interpreted their reforms as feeble and ineffective. Bowing to the pressure brought by employees' collective action and the more forceful legal regime emerging to tackle discrimination, Knight and other administrators determined that the university needed to supplement a formal affirmative action program with a program to improve face-to-face employee relations.[181] And, in a nod to their dawning understanding of the strength of black employees' discontent, they hired a prominent local black man named Howard Lee to develop that program. If they thought that deploying a black man as a stand-in for the administration would resolve distrust and animosity among employees, they were mistaken. Branded an "Uncle Tom" by "many of the black employees" and lacking "acceptance by the white employees," Lee disappointed administrators.[182] He was quietly moved to a different position within a year. Many active employees similarly rejected other "employee relations" overtures, refusing to attend employee "appreciation" parties.[183] Perhaps such measures would have been more effective ten years prior when employees initially made claims on the university. But employees themselves had changed since then, and they wanted more.

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[181] For employees' use of new anti-discrimination law to contest working conditions, see Nancy MacLean, *Freedom is Not Enough: The Opening of the American Workplace* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008); and Katherine Turk, *Equality on Trial: Gender and Rights in the Modern American Workplace* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

[182] Huestis to Wade, Nov. 21, 1969, Box 7, VP Records.

[183] Minah to Linke, May 8, 1969, Box 7, VP Records.

Employees considered reforms to supervisory practices a bit more promising. In response to ongoing employee complaints, the personnel department cracked down on supervisors who failed to properly follow vacation and grievance procedures, for instance.[184] More broadly, they launched a series of supervisor training sessions on "human relations" aimed expressly at correcting the more egregious examples of racial discrimination.[185] But this supervisory improvement program also had the "confidential," if widely suspected, purpose of ensuring "management-oriented supervisors."[186] Administrators sought this management-orientation among low-level supervisors chiefly by playing to their vanity and appealing to them, for the first time, "as members of management."[187] In addition, some of the most "labor oriented" supervisors, particularly the longer-serving black women who had managed to achieve relatively elevated status in housekeeping, were targeted for elimination by newly instituted skills exams.[188] Thus, the new supervisory program aimed to more closely regulate the behavior of supervisors to eliminate both abusive and labor-sympathetic behaviors. With every concession they made, administrators hoped to extract one of their own.

Likewise, employees saw the promised wage increases as an enormous victory, but still only a partial one. They were now ensured the national minimum $1.60 per hour within two years, bringing wages at universities into the mainstream, but not yet above the federal

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[184] Huestis to Jeff Steinert, Nov. 5, 1969, Box 7, VP Records. Steinert was referred to as the "Huestis of the hospital." Alan Ray to Huestis, Mar. 31, 1969, Box 10, VP Records.

[185] Huestis to Wade, Nov. 21, 1969, Box 7, VP Records.

[186] Adams to Linke, Dec. 22, 1969, Confidential, Box 6, VP Records.

[187] Ogletree to Rauch, Oct. 1, 1969, Box 9, VP Records.

[188] Adams to Linke, Dec. 22, 1969, Confidential, Box 6, VP Records.

poverty line.[189] Though this concession affected only the lowest-paid employees on campus, it galvanized employee activists. It also prompted administrators to commit to a project devising a "wage and salary structure that is *professionally* constructed and uniformly applied," marking at least the fourth such major study.[190] While administrators hoped that a centralized hiring and salary program would avoid "the type of confusion, disparity, and inequality that reigned" previously, they were intent on maintaining what they saw as "equitable relationships between the various job levels."[191]

These wage changes also brought on unexpected challenges for employee activists. Uniformity in wage scales did not easily map onto the heterogeneous and complex set of social relations that had developed in ad-hoc fashion over the years. Some white employees, particularly those in the middle range of the hourly employees, felt their relative status threatened by a shrinking of wage differentials. These employees resented the increases going to the lowest-paid employees, who they continued to view as lazy and unskilled.[192] These schisms and jealousies would continue to percolate among the many disparate groups that were now being called the 'non-academic workforce.'

The biggest cause for optimism was the new grievance procedure and employee council recommended by the faculty-trustee committee. Labor organizers on campus called

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[189] At $1.60/hr, 40 hours a week, a person would earn $3,328/year. The estimated poverty line in 1969 was $3743/year. For a history of the poverty index and very early critiques that the index underestimated the real income necessary for subsistence, see Gordon M. Fisher, "The Development of the Orshansky Poverty Thresholds and Their Subsequent History as the Official U.S. Poverty Measure," Census Working Paper, September 1997, retrieved from https://www.census.gov/library/working-papers/1997/demo/fisher-02.html.

[190] Huestis to Anlyan, Aug. 6, 1969, Box 6, VP Records. Emphasis added.

[191] Ibid.

[192] Administrators received particularly scathing complaints from doctors who, in defense of their personal secretaries, accused them of importing policies that "may be sound in industry but are destructive in this university." Dr. James Wyngaarden to Linke, July 18, 1969, VP Records.

for a new grievance procedure long before. Prior to the vigil, employees had no formal recourse to appeal a supervisor's action, except to that supervisor themselves.[193] A new Employee Council promised a space for hourly employees to raise and discuss important issues among themselves and with an administrative audience. Even at the highest level of appeal, the grievance procedure did not invoke an impartial arbiter as many activists hoped, but it did allow for the grievance to be heard by a three-person panel selected by both the employee and the university.[194] Whereas medical center and campus supervisors could fire at will employees who were "classified as professional," non-academic employees now had recourse with the new grievance procedure to contest similar actions.[195] Oliver Harvey, Helen Washington and other leaders of Local 77 swiftly won election to all of the service positions on the council.[196]

Yet, while employees were hopeful about the council, they also viewed it with a healthy dose of skepticism. For one thing, tensions among white maintenance workers and black service workers emerged almost immediately.[197] More broadly, many union activists feared that they risked getting absorbed by a "company union" that would leave the workers in a "most precarious position."[198] And if some employees worried that the council would 'just' be a company union, administrators hoped to paint it in even less-formal terms. To

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[193] Peter Brandon to Duke Faculty Friends of Local 77, "Summary of Local 77 Demands," Mar. 3, 1966, Box 9, Richard Watson Papers, DU Archives.

[194] "Employee council of Duke University," flyer, Feb. 12, 1969, Box 10, VP Records.

[195] Huestis to Anlyan, June 19, 1969, Box 6, VP Records.

[196] Huestis to Henry, Oct. 24, 1968, Box 10, VP Records.

[197] Maintenance Council to Huestis, Jan. 21, 1969, Box 10, VP Records.

[198] "Who Won at Duke," *NC Anvil*, April 27, 1968, Box 7, VP Records.

Vice President Huestis, the employee council was to be considered nothing more than an "open forum for employee discussion."[199] Huestis and his staff in the personnel office were careful to avoid any suggestion of legal standing, preferring "to maintain [contact] on a friendly, mutual regard" rather than offer any hint of formal negotiation.[200]

Moreover, the employee council and grievance procedures offered few avenues for addressing adverse workforce changes. Some departments used a promotion or change in personnel to "reorganize our work force," eliminating certain positions and making other positions "more sophisticated and more demanding."[201] Though some of these changes were in line with the continued focus on so-called modern staffing, they also worked to advance certain jobs beyond the reach of current employees. Many employees considered these changes "retaliatory in nature."[202] This was particularly true when the changes eliminated entire categories of employment that had previously been union strongholds, as happened in college housekeeping. Before the strike, the university employed several hundred women and men in sex-segregated cleaning duties. A year after the strike, Dean of the Chapel James Cleland circulated a newspaper clipping about the cessation of maid service at Amherst with the handwritten commentary "here's how to save some money."[203] What was likely an off-

[199] Huestis to All Nonacademic Employees, Memorandum, Aug. 30, 1968, Box 9, VP Records.

[200] Linke, "Response to Service Division Council Proposals," Mar. 6, 1969, Box 10, VP Records.

[201] Oscar Berninger to Huestis, Aug. 8, 1968, Box 5, VP Records; W.K. Howard to Bindewald, Jan. 8, 1969, Box 5, VP Records.

[202] Ibid.

[203] Jim C. to Gerhardt, Oct. 18, 1969, Box 9, VP Records. Cleland was widely considered a racial liberal.

handed remark became university policy within several years. Slowly, all bedroom service was suspended, and all dormitory maid positions eliminated.[204]

Duke's decision to suspend dormitory cleaning services reveals limits in the way historians have characterized changes in universities during this period, and particularly in the exclusively student-focused explorations of *in loco parentis.*[205] Though student activists had challenged certain aspects of the university's policies, the new housekeeping policies did not emerge from student requests. In fact, some students and parents strenuously objected to this policy change.[206] Rather, Duke's administration acknowledged that they hoped to redistribute labor power to "public spaces" by eliminating cleaning in dormitory residences.[207] Fiscal priorities likely helped motivate this personnel decision, but the decision also had a clear disciplinary element. The black maids who cleaned students' bedrooms were among the most vocal and union-oriented of Duke employees, and they had succeeded more than most in evoking the emotions and dedication of interested students. That administrators sought to reform this most obvious echo of the public household by simply eliminating those

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[204] Cleaning in women's dormitories was the first to be curtailed, beginning in 1970. While female students were asked to maintain their own living spaces, male students were still given bedroom service, though that too was restricted. On West Campus, cleaning was limited to twice-weekly and bed making was eliminated beginning several months later. Smith, Jr., Director of Housing Management, "Notice re: Custodial Services for Academic Year, 1970-1," Box 36, Women's College Records. Mike Mooney, "Maid Service to be Reduced Again Next Year," *The Duke Chronicle*, Mar. 23, 1971.

[205] Since *In loco parentis* is a legal term, a focus on the object of that legal regime makes sense, to an extent. But, as I have argued in chapter 2, it is meaningful to consider the concept in its social parameters as well and, in this case, it was a fiscal and employment decision to end this "caring" labor rather than one driven by student rejection of the service. For some representative works in this vein, see Mary Ann Wynkoop, *Dissent in the Heartland: The Sixties at Indiana University* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002); Renee N. Lansley, "College Women or College Girls?: Gender, Sexuality, and In Loco Parentis on Campus," (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 2004); Glenn Altschuler and Isaac Kramnick, *Cornell: A History, 1940-2015* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014).

[206] L.W. Smith, Jr. to Deans, Aug. 13, 1970, confidential, Box 5, VP Records.

[207] Bowers to Adams, Sept. 22, 1969, Box 12, VP Records.

employees altogether reflected a limited vision for remaking the modern university community.

Other disciplinary measures were less pointed but no less ominous. The university's new policy on "Pickets, Protests, and Demonstrations" was the most widely discussed of the new administrative reforms. The new policy initially targeted students exclusively but was extended to include non-academic employees in 1969.[208] Asserting that the university would not allow "substitution of noise for speech and force for reason," the new policy vowed to prevent "disruptive and disorderly conduct on its premises" from "interrupt[ing] its proper operation."[209] University police were also instructed to identify and crackdown on any form of picketing or "disruptive conduct."[210] With these regulations, university leadership hoped to forestall public, collective displays of opposition, but they especially wanted to avoid situations where the interests of students and employees might converge. Though they could not avoid contact between students and employees entirely, they hoped to avoid "the mixture of student activities and employee activities within a very confined area."[211]

Thus, in the wake of the vigil and strike, employee relations on campus descended into an "armed truce."[212] Through prolonged periods of activism and one tremendous show of power, employees demonstrated their willingness and ability to challenge the

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[208] Huestis to Linke, Apr. 14, 1969, Box 7, VP Records.

[209] "Statement of Policy and Rules of Regulations on Pickets, Protests and Demonstrations," Aug 2, 1968, Box 7, VP Records.

[210] Knight to Men and Women of Duke, Aug. 16, 1968, Box 45, Minah Records.

[211] Denis Nicholson to Bowers, Apr. 28, 1969, Box 12, VP Records.

[212] For the concept of an "armed truce" in labor relations, see Howell John Harris, *The Right to Manage: Industrial Relations Policies of American Business in the 1940s* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982). Harris was largely referring to the relationship between GM and its workers.

administration's supremacy. For their part, administrators and managers appeared both weary of that power, and stubbornly resistant to any attempt to curb their managerial authority. A series of episodes in the dining halls dramatized this delicate balance of power.

One situation in July 1969 began when a white manager, Oscar Berninger, sought to assign mopping duty to the black "counter girls" after "the man" who had been performing that work abruptly quit. Wary of an uproar, Berninger dared not approach the "girls" himself, instead delegating the task to a black female manager, Mae Eaton.[213] For these women, mopping represented an insidious affront to their dignity. They had specific jobs; they were not domestics. Berninger noted with surprise that "it became apparent during the conversations with them […] that mopping is directly related to their status and that they would go along with almost anything except this."[214] The women were "terribly upset about being approached" and refused to be cowed into taking on the duty.[215] However, despite these women's success in resisting this new task, Berninger's ultimate decision sought to reinforce the limits of their power. The dining hall would, he said, "make room for a man to do this" but only by "lay[ing] off one of the ladies."[216] They had won the battle, but Berninger, and the university administration, could still extract a steep price for their victory.

One year later, another scandal in the dining hall erupted which highlighted both managerial fears about the unstable nature of their authority and black employees' continued commitment to policing the boundaries of that authority. In this instance, Berninger fired a

[213]Berninger to Linke, July 29, 1969, Box 46, Minah Records. Mae Eaton was also the supervisor who instructed Shirley Ramsey to leave the cashier and work on the service line.

[214] Ibid.

[215] Ibid.

[216] Ibid.

woman named Della Lovely for refusing to change job assignments in the middle of a shift. Though she later apologized and asked for her job back, the dining hall management refused, declaring that this "would establish a dangerous precedent."[217] Led by Myrtle Washington, a prominent employee activist, several of the other "ladies (about 15)" who worked with Lovely protested her treatment, saying they "felt she had gotten a raw deal." Most notably, Washington asserted that a few months prior, one of the "ladies from the office (white) […] put her finger in Mr. Stephen's face and said she was not going to work in the Salad Pantry again."[218] This woman met with no repercussions for her refusal. In their view, then, Mr. Stephens' treatment of Lovely was excessively punitive, capricious, and driven at least in part by her status as a black woman. Perhaps feeling they had compromised too much in the mopping incident, the dining hall management held firm on the principle that "it was not up to the employees to decide who would do what work."[219] The support of her colleagues, and even the recently resolved EEOC investigation, could not save Lovely's job.

Employees in the dining halls or in campus housekeeping remained shut out from collective bargaining or impartial arbitration. In the years after the strike, they continued to rely mostly on the informal pressure tactics which had served them before. And these tactics sometimes proved successful. However, employees' increasing willingness to confront their supervisors and complain about certain decisions also gave rise to a parallel reaction from managers themselves. Managers seemed both more fearful of the destabilizing power of

[217] "Memo for Record," Feb. 5, 1971, Box 46, Minah Records.

[218] "Memo for Record," Feb. 4, 1971, Box 46, Minah Records.

[219] Ibid.

black defiance, and consequently more determined to make examples of employees they deemed insubordinate.

CONCLUSION

In a 1968 memorandum reflecting on the recent creation of a "non-academic personnel program at Duke," University Vice President Charles Huestis recounted a story of university benevolence and innovation. This was, according to Huestis, why the timing of union organizing on campus was so "paradoxical": the university had already done so much for them.[220] Casting employee relations reform as a gift bestowed by the university administration, he nonetheless lamented, not celebrated, what he called the formation of the "Fourth Estate in University affairs." Employee power was "placing in jeopardy" Duke's "traditional role as an employer-provider for the community."[221] Voicing frustration with federal enforcement of labor regulation, another administrator mourned that "vestiges of a happy informality that once existed on college campuses" were now "technical violations of the law."[222]

In fact, over the course of the 1960s, widely heralded as Duke's "Decade of Development," administrators had contended with a rising tide of employee discontent that threatened to disrupt the university's great ambitions. What administrators considered "a happy informality," Oliver Harvey and other black service workers had instead termed "the plantation system."[223] It was the ongoing challenge from these employees, requiring the

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[220] Huestis, Memorandum, Box 9, VP Records.

[221] Ibid.

[222] "State of the University," Box 14, VP Records.

[223] One anonymous administrator acknowledged that there was "reason to believe intimidation and unfairness did exist" and even that for a time it was "not uncommon to hear black employees referred to as 'niggers.'" "A Review of Duke's Relationship with Its Nonacademic Employees," Box 100, Sanford Records.

university to justify its enormous wealth, its privileged legal status, and its claim to unquestioned authority, that had destabilized and ultimately forced a reform of campus labor relations. In the end, these changes neither satisfactorily answered the workers' grievances nor ensured the autonomy and control the administration sought. Over the next decade, millions of dollars and thousands of hours would be spent debating whether Duke was "an appropriate place for union recognition in view of the University's nonprofit role and the charitable aspect."[224]

[224] "A Review of Duke's Relationship with Its Nonacademic Employees," Box 100, Sanford Records.

CHAPTER 6: THE UNIVERSITY AND THE UNIONS: REDEFINING SERVICE, PROFIT, AND THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY AT DUKE, 1971-1978

Dueling pamphlets appeared almost daily at the doors of Duke Hospital in the first months of 1979 in what one journalist called the "Battle of the Leaflets."[1] A union election was coming, and each side had a story to tell. University-issued missives described the Atlanta-based American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) as an "invading" force feigning interest in Duke employees "only to perpetuate itself."[2] The union warned workers to watch out for the management consultants - "goons from Chicago in three-piece suits and northern accents" - hired by the university, so they claimed, to spy on employees.[3]

Warring op-eds and public statements from union organizers and administrators drew the terms of engagement even more starkly. "Duke *cares* about its employees," Associate University Counsel Patricia Wagner professed; they were "a team" and unions were "outsiders."[4] Employee organizers also reanimated the familiar trope of kinship, but with a very different valence. "We ARE the family at Duke University Medical Center," they

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[1] Elizabeth Buchanan, "'Facts' vs. 'Lies': Battle of the Leaflets," *Aeolus*, Feb. 14, 1979.

[2] DMC Clericals for AFSCME, "An Open Letter to Duke Medical Center Clerical Employees," *The Duke Chronicle*, Nov. 11, 1978; Kate Whitmore, "Administrators Debate Med Center Organizers," *The Duke Chronicle*, Nov. 16, 1978, Union Reference Collection, Duke University Archives [DU Archives].

[3] Quoted in Buchanan, "'Facts' vs. 'Lies'."

[4] Whitmore, "Administrators Debate Med Center Organizers" (emphasis added); "Positive Employee Actions, 1977-1978," report, n.d., Box 134, Terry Sanford Records, DU Archives. Betty Mushak, "2,025 Duke Employees to Vote on Union Today," *Durham Morning Herald*, Nov. 16, 1976, Box 13, Vice President for Business and Finance [hereafter VP Records], DU Archives.

countered.[5] Outsiders from Atlanta or Chicago; mercenaries with no place on campus – but which side was which? A struggle over a union at Duke Hospital was underway, but so too was a struggle over who was a part of the university community and on what terms.

Across four major union elections held during the 1970s, employees and administrators pushed forward the fundamental questions about the knowledge economy raised by service workers in the 1960s- about belonging on campus, about autonomy and power, and about the nature of Duke as an institution. These bitterly fought campaigns ultimately produced mixed results for both sides, but the renewed employee activism revealed the extent of the recent transformations on campus. In the 1930s, during the New Deal era, university administrators had unilaterally shaped conversations around the privileges and responsibilities that accrued to an institution like Duke and the *people* who composed it. In the 1960s, Duke's employees began to collectively challenge administrator's omnipotence. During the 1970s, employees sought to formally consolidate that challenge through unionization and demanded a voice in the conversation about Duke's nature. How much they could achieve, however, remained uncertain.

While the terms of the conflict remained largely unchanged from the labor conflicts of the 1960s, the context of formal union elections clarified and raised the stakes higher. For committed employee activists, the elections were a struggle over racial dignity and self-determination. The university responded with a canny mixture of classic union-busting tactics and appeals to the university's "special status." These elections therefore exposed in even sharper relief the tension at the heart of the Duke enterprise: a nonprofit educational enterprise and a large-scale employer of low-wage labor. At the same time, they also

[5] "We ARE the family at Duke University Medical Center," ad in *The Duke Chronicle*, Jan. 26, 1979, 5.

revealed the complex, sometimes unpredictable nature of labor elections, which changed the shape of organizing and elevated new actors.

Thus, the 1970s were an inflection point in the history of labor at Duke, as well as the nation. Most constituents in the university community would have found such a vocal, employee-led debate unfathomable a decade earlier. But like employees in industries as varied as steel and retail, many Duke workers joined the "rebel rank and file" of the long 1970s.[6] In fact, their cooperation with AFSCME and the Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees put these workers at the forefront of the new unionization movement set on reinvigorating a stagnant labor bureaucracy. And despite falling rates of unionization in the private sector, these were meeting with some success, giving hope to organizers on campus.[7]

Yet, the history of employee organizing at Duke challenges the polarized historiography of class in the 1970s, which either laments the "last days of the working class" or celebrates the "first days of a reshaped and newly energized" one.[8] What happened when

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[6] Aaron Brenner et al., eds, *Rebel Rank and File: Labor Militancy and Revolt From Below During the Long 1970s* (New York: Verso, 2010).

[7] AFSCME alone gained nearly half a million members in the 1970s. See also Leon Fink and Brian Greenberg, *Upheaval in the Quiet Zone : 1199SEIU and the Politics of Health Care Unionism*, 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009). For AFSCME's increasing embrace of civil rights since 1964, see Joseph E. Hower, "'A Threshold Movement': Public-Sector Organizing and Civil Rights Unionism in the Postwar South," in *Reconsidering Southern Labor History*, eds. Matthew Hild and Keri Merritt (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2018): 205-220.

[8] Though there is now a robust literature on class in the 1970s, Jefferson Cowie and Lane Windham represent the poles of the debate in many ways. Cowie, Stayin' Alive: The 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class (New York: New Press, 2010); Windham, *Knocking on Labor's Door : Union Organizing in the 1970s and the Roots of a New Economic Divide* (Chapel Hill : The University of North Carolina Press, 2017). Quote from Windham on page 3. Though most agree that the economic crisis of the decade worked to undermine union organizing potential, historians differ in how they frame it (last dying gasp or period of remarkable working-class activism) and to what they ascribe the union movement's failure (white male intransigence, employer repression, or identity politics). For other scholars working on the period, see Dorothy Sue Cobbe, "A 'Tiger by the Toenail': The 1970s Origins of the New Working-Class Majority," *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 2, no. 3 (Sept. 2005): 103-114; Cobble, "'A Spontaneous Loss of Enthusiasm': Workplace Feminism and the Transformation of Women's Service Jobs in the 1970s," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 56 (Fall, 1999): 23-44; Nelson Lichtenstein, *State of the Union: A Century of American Labor*

unions came to the university fell somewhere in between. On the one hand, this history confirms in broad strokes some elements of existing, if sometimes competing, narratives: it highlights racial loyalty over class solidarity and intense employer resistance. On the other hand, at Duke, it was primarily white employees who were torn between racial and class justice. Black employees and activists on campus deployed 'racial' and 'class' rhetoric simultaneously, in ways that suggest they felt no need to choose between them.[9]

More specifically, white women largely spearheaded the resistance to unionization at Duke, challenging recent historiographical focus on their radical potential.[10] Though mostly in liminal positions in the university hierarchy, most white female clerical workers had also come to understand their status as fundamentally and *legitimately* different than service workers positioned below them. As they reacted to being drawn into campus unionization drives in the latter half of the decade, their behavior reflected a class identify forged in local and relational interactions. Like other white-collar workers across the nation, they too might

(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 178-245; and Katherine Turk, *Equality on Trial: Gender and Rights in the Modern American Workplace* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

[9] Lichtenstein, in particular, attributes the decline of the 'union idea' to the decade's 'rights consciousness' among people of color, even as he acknowledges their centrality to and enthusiasm for working-class groups and activism. Cowie also seems to suggest that African Americans chose race over class in the decade. Moreover, while he ultimately blames white men for unionism's decline, he still treats their experiences as archetypal. I argue that 'slavery' was a class-based critique of relations of power in the university, and that employee activists sought to use federal labor law alongside collective action. Activists in earlier periods of working-class organizing used racialized positioning and rhetoric (including 'white slaver'), they just happened to be white. Lichtenstein*, State of the Union*, 178-199; Cowie, *Stayin' Alive*.

[10] Historians have recently emphasized the powerful feminist and sometimes union organizing among clerical workers in the 1970s. See Cobble, "'A Spontaneous Loss of Enthusiasm;'" Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement: Workplace Justice and Social Rights in Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 211-5, 222, 226-7; Turk, *Equality on Trial*, 72-101; and Windham, *Knocking on Labor's Door*, 152-177. Turk argues elsewhere that some female clerical workers also rejected this workplace feminism, and often in favor of comparative status – an explanation that rings true here. "Labor's Pink-Collar Aristocracy: The National Secretaries Association's Encounters with Feminism in the Age of Automation," *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 11, no. 2 (July 2014): 85-109.

have been experiencing the "proletarianization" of clerical labor.[11] But, in their daily lives, these women understood incursion from below as the far greater threat.

Ultimately, the experiences of Duke employees offer insight into macro-economic trends towards service sector growth and new unionism, while highlighting the challenges facing employees in institutions like Duke that claimed a special moral or social status. Historians still tend to explain the declining fortunes of the American working class by cataloguing the loss of manufacturing jobs rather than by exploring the failure to elevate jobs typical of the service economy.[12] Too often, this focus betrays an assumption that manufacturing and service jobs *naturally* exist on opposite ends of the spectrum of pay and status. Like many other such workers around the nation, Duke's non-academic and service employees were, at this very moment, waging a struggle to change the status of their jobs and finally wrest their share of the security and prosperity promised long ago by the New Deal. The size and demographics of Duke's workforce mirrored the changing shape of the American working class, with a predominantly female, and largely black, workforce. However, as employees at a nonprofit educational and medical complex, they had to contend with powerful and persistent ideas about the "special" nature of their workplaces. In the four major union elections on Duke's campus in the decade, employee activists, administrators,

[11] For a discussion of the "proletarianization" of clerical work in the 1970s, see Evelyn Glenn Nakano and Roslyn L. Feldberg, "Degraded and Deskilled: The Proletarianization of Clerical Work," *Social Problems* 25, no. 1 (Oct. 1977): 52-64.

[12]Much of the literature on de-industrialization frames it in this way. See, for instance, Judith Stein, *Running Steel, Running America: Race, Economic Policy, and the Decline of Liberalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); Cowie, *Stayin' Alive*. For a potent critique of this discourse in popular culture and in professional history see, Thomas Jessen Adams, "Gender, The Wire, and the Limits of the Producerist Critique of Modern Political Economy," *Labor* 10, no. 1 (Mar. 2013): 29-34.

and other community members vigorously debated the meaning of the university's mission and status and the terms on which different people should exercise power there.

SEVEN YEARS, FOUR ELECTIONS: A BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

After a few years in which the "armed truce" played out among employees and administrators, a fundamental legal change shifted the ground beneath them. For decades, administrators at Duke and other colleges and universities enjoyed a de facto exemption from federal labor-relations oversight. The NLRB generally declined jurisdiction over non-profit educational institutions, denying the employees of those institutions the right to demand union recognition.[13] Duke and most other universities celebrated their exclusion from federal labor law, claiming that they operated under a fundamentally different logic than 'commerce.' However, in 1970, Cornell University and Syracuse University requested that the NLRB assert jurisdiction over union recognition elections at their respective campuses in part as a method to avoid jurisdiction under more punitive New York law.[14] These two universities now argued that "the operations and activities of educational institutions as a class, and of Cornell and Syracuse in particular, have an overwhelming impact and effect on interstate commerce."[15] As evidence, the colleges laid out data of their financial activities and regional economic significance.[16] Citing the principle of interstate commerce, the Board

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[13] See Chapter 1

[14] Cornell and Syracuse requested federal labor regulation because they wanted to avoid coming under more punitive New York state law. Christy Newman, "A Legal History of Collective Bargaining in Private Higher Education," (EdD diss., Boston College, 1984).

[15] *Cornell University et al.*, 183 NLRB 41 (1970), Box 134, Terry Sanford Records, DU Archives.

[16] Moreover, they argued, the earlier *Columbia* decision had unintentionally created a "no man's land" where employees at such institutions lacked recourse to state labor boards, because the jurisdiction rightfully belonged on the national level. See chapter 1. In their ruling in Cornell, the Board read greater meaning into the Congressional decision not to *explicitly* exclude non-profit educational institutions in the text of the law's 1947 amendments.

reversed the precedent set fifteen years earlier in *Columbia* and asserted jurisdiction.[17] Taken together with the movement among state and national governments to extend other labor protections to employees at nonprofit institutions, this decision represented a small but significant exception to the widespread enervation of labor law during the period.

The Cornell decision attracted the attention of university officials across the country, and significantly alarmed administrators at Duke. Though many universities and colleges had filed amicus briefs in support of Cornell and Syracuse, many others had objected to the change.[18] Though Senator Sam Ervin wrote an urgent letter to new Duke President Terry Sanford alerting him to this "serious matter," it arrived too late for Sanford to file a letter to the court on the university's behalf.[19] Two months into his tenure, Sanford was a former governor of North Carolina and local Democratic Party heavyweight. He would shepherd the university through the entire decade of unionization attempts. Whatever Sanford's formal response would have been, others in Duke's leadership seemed "concerned about this as to its implication for other universities and specifically our own case."[20] They were fearful that the remnant of employee activism that they could not seem to vanquish would be "pleased about this."[21]

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[17] In a small coincidence, the Vigil at Duke was actually cited in the ruling as evidence of the need for greater federal oversight.

[18] Observers at the time suggested that schools in the South, where state law was laxer, were more likely to resist federal oversight. Newman, "A Legal History of Collective Bargaining in Private Higher Education."

[19] Sam J. Ervin, Jr., Senator, to Sanford, July 20, 1970, Box 134, Sanford Records.

[20] Marcus E. Hobbs, Memorandum for record, June 17, 1970, Box 86, Sanford Records.

[21] No author, handwritten memo to President Sanford, n.d., Box 134, Sanford Records.

Administrators were right to worry over the boost the *Cornell* ruling would give labor organizers at Duke. A month before the ruling was handed down, employee leader Oliver Harvey notified newly-installed President Sanford that the university's service workers were putting an end to their two-year experiment with the Employee Council and would seek official union recognition. After the *Cornell* ruling came down, a representative of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) wrote to President Sanford to officially claim jurisdiction over the university's campus food service, custodial, and other service workers and requesting recognition.[22] Five months later, Sanford agreed to a university-wide election supervised by the NLRB, though it would be more than a year before that election would come to pass. The impending election clarified and sharpened the stakes of the conflict between service employees and administrators, with employee organizers giving voice to a shared feeling of racialized class oppression and administrators toggling between lofty idealism and aggrieved paternalistic authority.

Meanwhile, employees and administrators waged another, quieter negotiation over how to structure an appropriate bargaining unit or, in other words, who would be empowered to decide whether a union came to the university. Like in elections in the profit sector, the debates between union organizers and university administrators over this were simultaneously substantive (which employees rightfully shared a "community of interest") and strategic (what kind of unit might ensure success). But unlike in those elections, these contests also centered in part around Duke's status as a nonprofit institution, a question which would loom over later decisions about election bargaining units on campus.[23] Though

[22] P.J. Ciampa, AFSCME, to Sanford, Oct. 8, 1970, Box 13, VP Records.

[23] NLRB's decision profoundly impacted not just the 1972 election but the contours of future elections as well. It would be used as precedent for years.

rarely remarked upon in scholarly literature, bargaining unit decisions could have enormous influence over the resulting election.[24]

In 1972, union organizers eventually secured a favorable bargaining unit, though they vigorously protested the exclusion of large categories of black service workers. That exclusion came when the university won a major early procedural victory over NLRB jurisdiction in the hospital. According to the NLRB's ruling, without a formal change to Taft-Hartley, non-profit hospitals remained explicitly excluded from their oversight. So, despite finding that a central personnel function oversaw all employees in the hospital and university, and despite opposition from a member of the board and other legal scholars, the majority decision in November of 1971 found that the exclusion written into Taft-Hartley a quarter century before "literally" applied to Duke University Hospital: "a nonprofit hospital operated by another nonprofit entity – albeit one over which we would assert jurisdiction – is nonetheless still a nonprofit hospital."[25] This, at least in the short term, allowed the hospital leadership to stave off organizing pressure there and cut off some strong pro-union cohorts from the election. However, in a boon for the union, the NLRB then ordered a unit consisting of bi-weekly campus service employees and excluding technical, maintenance, and clerical

[24] Historians rarely discuss the impact of bargaining unit decisions on the outcome of elections. For instead, though Windham advocates a closer attention to NLRB rulings, she does not discuss any bargaining unit controversies. Windham, *Knocking on Labor's Door*. For a useful exception, see Robert Korstad, *Civil Rights Unionism: Tobacco Workers and the Struggle for Democracy in the Mid-Twentieth-Century South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 130, 135, 192. For a discussion of the New Deal-era debate about who and how bargaining units should be administered, see Christopher Tomlins, *The State and the Unions: Labor Relations, Law, and the Organized Labor Movement in America, 1880-1960* (New York: Cambridge University press, 1985), 148-150, 213-230. At the time, the AFL lobbied to allow employees themselves to determine their bargaining units, while the CIO preferred plant-wide units and, wanting to disrupt the narrow craft-focus of some employees, advocated the NLRB be empowered to arbitrate those questions. Ultimately, they settled on a combination of precedent (where a customary approach was established) and the desire of workers (where one was not).

[25] *Duke University* 194 NLRB 31 (1971), 238.

employees.[26] This ruling worked mostly in the employees' favor by limiting the election's scope to the departments long involved in campus organizing. On January 27, 1972, Local 77 won a resounding victory, with a vote of 491 to 10 in favor of organizing.[27] After more than a decade of struggle by Harvey and other organizers, a union had finally come to the university.

Local 77's success in the 1972 election had an unexpected outcome in spurring an organizing drive among the white workers in the maintenance department. Administrators had been wary about discontent in the maintenance department before, especially as disenchantment there grew in response to the wage increases given to lower-skilled employees. Moreover, maintenance workers also felt themselves particularly hard hit by the university's new overtime rules, which sought to contain costs by limiting hours allowed. These changes had caused a "very sensitive situation" within the department in the late 1960s, but administrators and managers thought they had succeeded in containing the unrest.[28] However, that discontent emerged again in light of the service worker election and spread quickly. Within a few months, campus maintenance workers announced they were attempting to organize under the aegis of the International Union of Operating Engineers. As with the service worker campaign, maintenance workers organized largely around a shared racial class identity – but this time of defensive, skilled white manhood. When an election

[26] These exclusions were rather standard, but other, more marginal decisions were a bit more surprising. Senior kitchen staff and cashiers, for instance, were excluded, while maid-pages were included over the objections of the union. The dining hall cashier, a position which had only been desegregated in the 1960s, was deemed an office clerical position. On the other hand, in part because the maid-pages had mostly been promoted from among the maid staff, the NLRB ruled that they shared "a community of interests." *Duke University* 194 NLRB 31 (1971), 238.

[27] Results, 11-RC-3234, Jan. 27, 1972, Box 13, VP Records.

[28] Howard to Huestis, July 17, 1969, Box 6, VP Records.

was executed in November, employees again voted overwhelmingly in favor of organization. A second union had now come to the university. Thus, by the end of 1972, a significant portion of Duke's campus non-academic workforce had joined one of two unions active there.

However, for many Duke employees, even this was a cold comfort because hospital workers remained outside of NLRB coverage. Barbara Flowers worked in Duke's kitchens in the hospital just as Myrtle Washington did on campus, but she had been given no choice to join a union. Rose Gattis had organized Local 77 alongside Oliver Harvey, but, as a hospital worker, she could reap no benefits. Many of these employees knew their colleagues by name, lived among them, attended the same churches, were friends, and even sometimes family. And, they had the same name on their paychecks: Duke. But, because of what seemed to many of them an arbitrary legal distinction, they were unfairly barred from participation.

Though activists remained determined to bring unions to the hospital, legal restrictions hampered their efforts for years. A month after the campus election in 1972, attorney William A. McHugh wrote to President Sanford to notify him that an "overwhelming majority" of the service employees of the university medical center - "all of the 'biweekly non-academic, non-supervisory employees" - had signed authorization cards for a union. He asked for immediate recognition.[29] Sanford quickly rejected McHugh's petition, determined to wait for further clarification on the non-profit hospital exemption from federal authority.[30] The hospital exemption written into Taft-Hartley in 1947, which the NLRB had upheld in 1971, prevented them from forcing Duke Medical Center to bargain

[29] William McHugh, Jr., to Sanford, Feb. 2, 1972, Box 26, VP Records.

[30] Charles Huestis, Vice President of Business and Finance, to McHugh, Feb. 11, 1972, Box 26, VP Records.

with an elected employee union, and the university's administrators refused to negotiate without being required to.

While the hospital remained unorganized awaiting legal reform, several confrontations in the mid-1970s highlighted the continued volatility of the environment there. In 1972, around thirty employees protested after hearing that a white doctor had hit a black employee. They led an orderly demonstration in front of Vice President for Health Affairs William Anlyan's office.[31] Less than a year later, fifty employees "took part in an illegal work stoppage" to protest female maids being "assigned mopping duties," usually performed by male janitors.[32] In accessing the situation later, Director of Employee Relations Herbert Aikens acknowledged that the "mopping issue is only the surface problem and that there are other underlying reasons for discontent" but that "the words 'scrubbing and mopping' are key words which promote emotions."[33] Employees felt that this change was made to "abolish the jobs for the male employees" and to "downgrade the dignity of the black woman."[34] Shortly after, black women in low-level clerical jobs staged a "sick-out" to press for pay raises.[35] Finally, in December of that year, several hundred employees from the hospital and campus marched in protest of what they called the "Great Paycheck Rip-Off."[36] For employees who lived paycheck to paycheck, the university's attempt to push the final

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[31] Memorandum, Jan. 21, 1970, Box 9, VP Records.

[32] The echo of an earlier dining hall controversy, discussed in chapter five, is telling. Personnel Department, Activities Report, June 1973, Box 12, VP Records.

[33] Herbert Aikens, Director, Employee Relations, to Richard Jackson, Personnel Director, July 2, 1973, Box 10, VP Records.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Karen Brodkin Sacks, *Caring by the Hour: Women, Work, and Organizing at Duke Medical Center* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 101-102.

[36] "Paycheck Rip-Off," Duke Employees' News, Nov. 1974, Labor Unions Reference Collection, DU Archives.

scheduled pay date to the new year felt disastrous and they resented the administration's power to unilaterally upend their lives. Each of these cases represented a relatively small conflict, resolved fairly quickly and without much sacrifice on either side. But victories in each case seemed to carry both material and symbolic weight for employee activists: even without a union to negotiate on their behalf, they demonstrated the power of collective action. These successes kept enthusiasm for unionization alive in the hospital while activists awaited a change in the law, ratcheting up the tension further.

When legal relief was finally achieved in July of 1974, it came with a number of caveats. According to the testimony of experts and congressional advocates, the new law extending NLRB coverage to employees of nonprofit hospitals rectified "an historical anomaly and a present-day monstrosity" in which "these deserving workers were excluded from the Nation's labor relations system for far too long."[37] Most hospital administrators who testified in front of the Senate and the House opposed a change in the law. But ultimately, the legislators sponsoring the bill found that there was "no acceptable reason" why nearly one million and a half employees in nonprofit hospitals should "be denied their basic right to secure the full benefits of America's economic and social institutions."[38] Going even further than the board did in asserting jurisdiction over non-profit universities, one senator stated unequivocally that "the hospital industry is big business" and not, as the lawmakers assumed

[37] *Coverage of Nonprofit Hospitals Under National Labor Relations Act, 1973: Hearings on S. 794 and S. 2292, Day 1, Before the Subcomm. on Labor*, 93rd Cong. 29 (1973) (Statement of Dr. Richard Liebes, Bay District Joint Council of Service Employees International Union); Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, *Legislative History of the Coverage of Nonprofit Hospitals Under the National Labor Relations Act, 1974, Public Law 93-360* (S.3203) (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office), v, (Statement by Harrison A. Williams, Jr., Chairman).

[38] *Legislative History Public Law 93-360*, 10, 95 (Statements by Williams).

in 1947, "charitable in nature."[39] However, citing the "public interest" involved, the legislation also required that organizers of the newly-covered employees acknowledge several "special considerations."[40] Most significant were provisions for mandatory mediation, restrictions on striking, and strong incentives for larger, broader bargaining units. Even in finally extending labor protections to hospital employees, legislators voiced a set of competing impulses – the "basic rights" of hospital workers and the "special" needs of the hospital itself – that would continue to shape the organizing landscape indefinitely.

Those tensions would plague the organizing drive among hospital workers at Duke. Activists there received the news of coverage with enthusiasm, and immediately began organizing among their historical strongholds in the service departments. However, within a year of the drive beginning, the NLRB Regional Director overseeing the proposed election issued a ruling drastically expanding the size of the bargaining unit from one thousand people (1000) to more than nineteen hundred (1900). More significantly, the Regional Director included in the unit nearly all of the Medical Center's clerical staff. Union organizers were caught entirely by surprise because many other cases involving hospital workers had allowed for a service-exclusive unit. The regional director justified his ruling by appealing to the special conditions written into the new legislation. Citing the danger of "unwarranted fragmentation," he ruled that clerical workers performed duties "related to patient care" and that they "have more contacts with employees in the service unit than with business office

[39] *Legislative History Public Law 93-360*, 94 (Statement by Williams), 293 (Statement by William D. Ford, Representative from Michigan).

[40] *Legislative History Public Law 93-360,* v, (Statement by Harrison A. Williams, Jr., Chairman).

clericals."[41] In so doing, the Regional Director effectively transformed the bargaining unit, and thus the election. No longer a service worker unit, the decision on unionization would now be jointly decided by service *and* clerical workers.

Activists and administrators alike viewed these rulings as a devastating blow to the union's chances at success. Though Local 77's Business Agent repeatedly stressed that the union ideally wanted "all Duke workers to be organized," the class of employees on whom they had focused their efforts for many months were now nearly outnumbered in the bargaining unit.[42] More troubling, the ruling introduced profound and perhaps insurmountable differences of race, class, and position into the newly-enlarged unit which now included white, female clerical workers along with predominantly black service workers. Though activists dutifully tried to broaden the base of the union's support, most lamented what they saw as a betrayal of the spirit of their organizing.[43] The university had succeeded in "flood[ing] the election unit" with several thousand clerical and technical workers."[44] On November 16, 1976, more than four years after the union's initial representation claim, the NLRB supervised an election of over two thousand eligible employees. The union made a few, ineffectual challenges to ballots, but the first fight for a union in the hospital had been lost by a margin of fifty-nine votes (743-684).[45]

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[41] The additions included one hundred medical transcriptionists and medical secretaries, an additional one hundred medical records and coding clerks, fifty office clerks, nearly four hundred secretaries, and several smaller categories of nominally technical and clerical employees. 'Business office clerical' is a legal labor term.

[42] "Local 77 Election is postponed until NLRB considers appeal," *The Duke Chronicle*, Dec. 8, 1975. They had, in fact, had some limited success with attracting white employees in the late 1960s. *We the People*, Nov. 17, 1967, Box 12, Minah Records.

[43] "Local 77 Special Bulletin," Nov. 25, 1975, Unions Reference Collection.

[44] Paul Bermanzohn, MD, open letter from Friends of Local 77, 1975, Box 26, VP Records.

[45] *Business and Finance Report*, April 1977, Box 33, VP Records.

Chastened, but not dissuaded, many of the same employees began almost immediately to organize again. For union sympathizers in the hospital, the previous election was devastating, but it was devastating precisely because they felt victory had been within their grasp. The bargaining unit decision had unexpectedly upended their strategy by fundamentally transforming the terrain of the election halfway through the organizing campaign. And, yet, even so, the election was lost by only a matter of votes. Dedicated unionists organized around ideals of racial justice. At the same time, bowing to the prerogatives of the new bargaining unit, they dedicated more energy to convincing the increasingly polarized white clerical cohort to join with them. On the other side, university rhetoric about its special nature intensified.

Ultimately, the years of struggle seemed to finally catch up with employee activists as the February 1979 election day approached. Organizer Gattis warned that enthusiasm even among the union's strongholds in the hospital's dining facilities was waning.[46] Some had fallen prey to the university's carrot-and-stick union busting strategy. Others had grown unhappy with the union's more professional and mainstream tone. At the same time, the relentless counter campaign aimed at clerical workers prevented the union from making many inroads on those voters.[47] When the votes were counted, few among the organizers were surprised at the bad news. For the second time in less than three years, a union in the hospital had been defeated.

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[46] Sacks, *Caring by the Hour*, 158.

[47] Gali Hagel to Pye, Apr. 4, 1977, report on meeting with biweekly employees, Box 35, VP Records; Pye to Jackson, Jan. 18, 1977, Box 35, VP Records.

CUTTING-EDGE UNION BUSTING AND AGGRIEVED PATERNALISM

The NRLB decision on the hospital bargaining unit in 1976 was a major turning point in the campus drives for unionization, allowing university administrators to play off of the powerful racialized class tensions in the hospital. But efforts to expand the bargaining unit in such a way were only a part of a broader anti-union program that used business-tested union-busting tactics to update the university's own traditions of paternalistic pressure. Through the course of all four elections, the university deployed a range of other anti-union strategies that mixed positive reinforcement and disciplinary measures in ways that built on the university's earlier approaches to personnel reform. In this, Duke was little different than the ninety-two percent of employers which historian Lane Windham found adapted their personnel policies in order to forestall organizing drives.[48] In discussing the work of the personnel department, Huestis explicitly acknowledged that "our job now is to do the kind of work in management and employee relations that will assure" victory in the event of an election.[49] Learning from their peers in regional industries and colleagues in universities across the country, Duke administrators eagerly embraced the tools of union avoidance.

Having used business consultants in previous attempts to organize their workforce, Duke's administrators now turned to the field again to lead its anti-union campaign. This use of "labor relations consultants" represented a significant escalation of its defensive posturing.[50] The university hired Management Methods, Inc., a notorious union-busting

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[48] Windham, *Knocking on Labor's Door*, 20.

[49] Huestis to Howard Lee, Nov. 19, 1976, Box 22, VP Records.

[50] For the increasing use of such "consultants" in the 1970s, see Windham, *Knocking on Labor's Door*, 38, 57-8, 68-71, 74-75. See page 57 for a discussion of 3M specifically, and 38 for the use of anti-union consultants by other universities. For discussion of labor relations consultants within the longer context of antiunionism, see Robert Michael Smith, *From Blackjacks to Briefcases: A History of Commercialized Strikebreaking and Unionbusting in the United States* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003), 98-117 and Stephen Norwood,

consulting firm, purportedly at a cost of six hundred dollars per consultant per day.[51] (These were the "goons from Chicago" of which labor organizers warned.) Though administrators sought to keep the involvement of '3M' secret, the agency was deeply involved in designing the university's robust and aggressive anti-union campaign. 3M urged Duke to intensify its rhetoric to "impede" and intimidate employees.[52] They specifically encouraged the university to delegitimize the union, to raise fears of a strike, and to empower supervisors and management to do whatever was necessary to dissuade unionization among their staff.[53] "Remember," one administrator noted, "the most important thing for us is to win this election, not for us to be cautious."[54]

If 3M represented the stick, personnel changes were the carrot in the administration's effort to combat unionization. Even union critics knew it was necessary to "correct many of the true and valid grievances of our employees."[55] For one, the administration steadily increased pay rates through the 1970s, especially for the lowest earners, in direct response to the unionization drives.[56] Moreover, as the union secured election victories on campus, administrators made it a priority to "keep non-bargaining unit employees better paid than

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Strikebreaking and Intimidation: Mercenaries and Masculinity in Twentieth-Century America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 228-247.

[51] Kate Whitmore, "'Union Busters' Hired," *The Duke Chronicle*, Feb. 2, 1979, clipping, Union Reference Collection.

[52] "Pre-Petition Period," letter, quoted in Sacks, *Caring by the Hour*, 147.

[53] Sacks, *Caring by the Hour*, 147, 155-7.

[54] Positive Employee Actions, 1977-1978, Report, Box 134, Sanford Records. A remarkably similar sentiment articulated by West Coast Industrial Relations Associates was quoted in Windham, *Knocking on Labor's Door*, 24.

[55] Donald Serafin, M.D., Associate Professor, to Sanford, Feb. 17, 1977, Box 134, Sanford Records.

[56] Huestis to Fred Von Canon, Sanford Furniture Company, Sept. 17, 1969, Box 10, VP Records.

union" in order to disincentive unionization.[57] Finally, administrators also offered small concessions on other issues without conceding unionization. Pathways to Employee Progress (PEP), an educational plan for hospital employees, represented the most significant administrative effort to respond to concerns about "dead-end jobs." Some administrators were committed to these programs as an ethical imperative. But Huestis also acknowledged their value in creating a more caring "image" of the university to combat "some sensitive situations."[58] Though using reforms like these to stave off unionization skirted the line of legality, Duke and other employers in the 1970s were empowered by lax NLRB oversight to make use of such tactics.[59] Director of Personnel Richard Jackson, hired in 1973, succinctly summarized the link between this strategy and union-busting efforts when he noted, "if they (management) are already doing everything for everyone […] you don't need a union to make them do more."[60]

The university's reformed communications campaign was undertaken in the same spirit. In an explicit "effort to maintain non-union status," the personnel department planned a broad communications realignment in order to "promote the 'personal touch.'"[61] They sent out department emissaries for regular "coffee meetings" with groups of workers and publishing a new regular bulletin highlighting "human interest stories about employees."[62]

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[57] Report of the special committee on labor strategy, Feb. 8, 1977, Box 35, VP Records.

[58] Huestis to Dr. Ewald Busse, Dec. 13, 1974, Box 22, VP Records.

[59] Windham, *Knocking on Labor's Door*, 57-82.

[60] Richard Jackson, quoted in David Odell, "Organizing Labor, Two Sides," *Aerolus*, clipping in Union Reference Collection.

[61] 1977 Campaign Introduction and Schedule, report, Box 134, Sanford Records.

[62] "Positive Employee Actions, 1877-1978," report, Box 134, Sanford Records.

As an extension of this new, "enlightened" personnel relations approach, Personnel Director Bill Linke made sure that other administrators publicly acknowledged and thanked non-academic workers. "Caring for the beautiful campus, cleaning dorms and feeding may not be a highlight of a college career," he conceded, "but surely many appreciate them."[63] The university's "special committee on labor strategy" particularly advocated recognizing "Plain Jane" departments in these publications.[64] Unsurprisingly, these "Plain Jane" departments were precisely those threatening unionization. Linke and other administrators now targeted bastions of pro-union sentiment with a wave of positive feedback.

Alongside these reforms to wage structures and communications – to add a supposedly modern character to the university's labor relations program – administrators betrayed the continued power of older, paternalistic ways of relating to employees. Reflecting their sense of aggrieved authority, they interpreted employee activism as institutional and personal betrayal. Despairing of the bulk of his staff's priorities, Ted Minah ostentatiously praised those who, "if given a chance, will prove their loyalty" by resisting unionization.[65] He posthumously celebrated longtime janitor Frank Wall for being "very proud of the title, 'Chief Sheriff, Duke University Dining Halls'" which he earned by teaching "good hygiene and sanitation habits to the employees."[66] Yet, he failed to recognize the complexity of such a statement - that Wall could not have had a law enforcement job on Duke's campus, that Wall's expectations for his treatment at Duke were conditioned by a different set of circumstances, or that other employees might not take kindly to such

[63] Linke to Huestis, Apr. 26, 1972, Box 7, VP Records.

[64] Report of the special committee on labor strategy, Feb. 8, 1977, Box 35, VP Records.

[65] Minah to Huestis, memorandum, Feb. 24, 1969, Box 10, VP Records.

[66] Minah to Linke, Jan. 16, 1969, Box 46, Theodore Minah Records, DU Archives.

comparisons. And while these comments were not likely to convince stubborn employees to renounce the union, they highlight Minah's sense that his personal claims on his employees were eroding.

Even administrators and personnel representatives who represented the new turn in employee relations traded in emotional and paternalistic tropes. While one radical group accused the university of "putting out literature warning workers about joining the 'black union'" – the service workers union established in 1972 - most in the university's leadership knew better than to make explicitly racialized arguments against unionization.[67] Yet they still spoke of "Duke's traditional role as an employer-provider" and lamented the "invasion" of their domain by organizers, betraying the persistent condescension and territoriality of their outlooks.[68] In leaflets and memos, they warned of the effects of unionization not simply in lost wages or opportunity costs, in dollars and cents, but also in "hard feelings and broken friendships" if employees were to insist upon letting "outsiders […] stand in the way of the progress" being made.[69] A rhetorical appeal to community suffused the entire employee relations program; "the concept of 'we' and 'they' had been strongly de-emphasized and [the] emphasis had been placed on 'us,'" one personnel administrator noted.[70] The university tried to demand that its employees "Stand up […] for Duke."[71]

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[67] Newsletter of Durham Health Workers and Patients, Dec. 23, 1975, Unions Reference Collection.

[68] Huestis, Memorandum, Box 9, VP Records.; DMC Clericals for AFSCME, "An Open Letter to Duke Medical Center Clerical Employees," *The Duke Chronicle*, Jan. 11, 1978, Unions Reference Collection.

[69] "Statement to supervisors," n.d., Box 9, VP Records.

[70] Business Meeting, minutes, Sept. 3-4, 1970, Box 27, Minah Records.

[71] "Statement to Supervisors," Box 9, VP Records.

Administrators' reforms to the culture of university labor relations highlight the competing impulses at play in Duke's labor reforms: the newfound fear of employee power tempered by the fundamentally superficial way they viewed the necessary changes. Given "the importance of symbolism," administrators recommended changing the language used to refer to nonacademic employees, from 'biweeklies' to 'support staff' in 1977. The former nomenclature referred to these employees "by a 'time' rather than by a 'people' term," Personnel Director Richard Jackson noted, "no wonder they feel a sense of not belonging."[72] Still, even as administrators began to pay verbal homage to the university's non-academic workers, their chief concern remained avoiding unionization and retaining unilateral power on campus. Huestis and Linke agreed that the university messaging should "emphasize the contribution that non-academic employees make" to the university, but only insofar as to "make them aware of their responsibility in this respect and the pride that they can take in the significance of their job."[73]

Likewise, administrators revealed a continued sensitivity to hierarchy and status within the Duke community that suggested the restrained nature of reform. Recognizing that the black supervisors in dietetics and housekeeping "identified with the rank and file rather than with the Hospital," administrators grew determined to recapture them as "management representatives."[74] They did so by treating these supervisors, "for the first time," as members of hospital management - efforts that they tellingly called "indoctrination."[75] Moreover, men

[72] Jackson to Huestis, Mar. 25, 1977, Box 35, VP Records.

[73] Huestis to Linke, July 6, 1970, Box 7, VP Records.

[74] "Current status of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission investigation," report, n.d., Box 9, VP Records.

[75] Ibid.; Huestis to Linke, Sept. 2, 1970, Box 7, VP Records.

like University Chancellor Kenneth Pye continued to believe that the problems of racial segregation in the workforce would be solved by "attract[ing] more first-rate Negroes," not by reckoning with a history of discrimination and exploitation.[76] Obviously, such thinking would hardly assuage the resentment felt by black workers who currently worked at the university, who were apparently not "first-rate." Thus, while official rhetoric from Duke's administrators increasingly praised the university's non-academic workforce, behind the scenes they often appeared rather unreconstructed in their view of the status of these workers.

Duke administrators categorically opposed efforts to curb their managerial authority through collective bargaining, combining a variety of old and new methods to prevent unionization. In the 1960s, they had begun to reach out to other university administrators and to local business leaders for strategies to counter employee unrest and make the university's labor relations more "modern." While administrators immediately put these strategies to use in reactive and ad-hoc, in the 1970s they became part of a holistic union avoidance program under a politician-President and a new, formally credentialed cadre of labor relations experts. They adjusted wages, devised new advancement programs, retrained supervisors in modern management methods, and unfurled a revamped internal communications program that sought to remake the university's image – all in response to employee pressures. Meanwhile, echoes remained of the university's past in administrators' and managers' persistent appeals to familial devotion. And though they may have struggled over what manner of emotional appeals were appropriate, Duke officials from the president to the dining hall manager all understood paternalism and modernity to be compatible and complementary.

[76] Pye to Charles Wade, Jr., R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, Sept. 14, 1970, Box 16, VP Records.

DEFINING A UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY: PROFIT, BELONGING, AND POWER

If the range of union-busting techniques outlined above was common to other enterprises, Duke's status as a nonprofit added a rhetorical and legal wrinkle unique to union drives in this sector. The *Cornell* decision in 1971 upended the protections offered universities from collective bargaining. Eventually, federal legislators debated and then ultimately rescinded the same for nonprofit hospitals, though not in time for many union advocates in Duke hospital. Like the New Deal era in heavy manufacturing, the 1970s served for the nonprofit sector as an important proving ground for union enthusiasm on the one hand and employer resistance on the other. But, even as these legal barriers to collective bargaining gradually fell, Duke administrators refused to abandon the rhetorical ground of nonprofit exceptionalism. Instead, questions over Duke's nature and status became central to the ways that employees, administrators, and the public debated unionization.

On the one hand, the university's propaganda campaign was aimed primarily at convincing employees and the broader public of the sheer incompatibility of unionization and higher education. Over and over again, they argued that "the University's nonprofit role and the charitable aspect" of their work meant that "hospital and academic institutions are uniquely unsuited for the divisiveness of industrial warfare.[77]" Unions, they argued, were singularly focused on "profits" which "do not exist" at Duke.[78] Moreover, Duke's nonprofit status brought with it certain unique and, ultimately, disqualifying organizational challenges. Administrators argued that the university was hamstrung by "limited resources" and lacked

[77] Notwithstanding the obvious fact that "industrial warfare" existed on campus with or without union recognition. "Description of Duke University," n.d., Box 13, VP Records.

[78] Ibid.

the "same financial flexibility of an industrial concern."[79] And because it was "not an industrial complex but a community for wide diversification of human growth," it could not in good conscience privilege the needs of its service employees over the "purposes for which it exists."[80] Unions simply did not *belong* on Duke's campus; they threatened the very mission of the institution. Many people remained convinced of duke's special nature, and administrators were determined to trade on that social capital. They continued to tout the "liberal persuasion" of the university.[81] "A university is not a factory," President Sanford maintained. Because Duke was "service oriented and not profit oriented," its staff must "accept the obligation to do as much additional work and to put in as much additional time as necessary."[82] Employees at such institutions ought to be driven by altruistic responsibilities, they argued, not individual rights.

The university's efforts to emphasize the moral economy of nonprofits proved insufficient during the first campus organizing drive, as it had earlier in the period leading up to the vigil. With a measure of success, union organizers alternately questioned and weaponized the university's privileged legal and social status. They argued that Duke's poverty-level wage scale was "disgraceful, *especially* in an institution of learning."[83] Though

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[79] "A review of Duke's relationship with its nonacademic employees," n.d., Box 100, Sanford Records.

[80] "Statement on Employee Representation," c. 1970, Box 9, VP Records; "Description of Duke University," VP Records; "Description of Duke University," n.d., Box 13, VP Records.

[81] Huestis, Memorandum, Dec. 19, 1975, Box 10, VP Records.

[82] "Message from the President," 1973, Box 14, VP Records; Huestis to Berninger, Dec. 19, 1975, Box 10, VP Records.

[83] AFSCME Employees Committee to Sanford, May 8, 1970, Box 13, VP Records. Emphasis added. These critiques are remarkably consonant with those levied at Harvard in 1929 after they fired several "scrubwomen." Linzy Brekke, "Fair Harvard? Labor, Law, and Gender in the Harvard Scrubwoman Case 1921-1931," in *Yards and Gates: Gender in Harvard and Radcliffe History*, ed. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 169.

activists acknowledged that "according to the law they are a 'non-profit' institution," they pointed to prices for services, the university's landholdings, and massive capital spending as evidence that Duke was, functionally, "like any other business."[84] One employee summed up the visceral feeling of disbelief when she noted, "If that cafeteria is non-profit then I'm a Japanese beetle."[85] "Duke does make money," employee activists declared.[86] Using a legal sleight of hand, it simply did not have to call that money "profit."

And they made that money through the same processes as other businesses: labor exploitation. Far from a liberal bastion, "the intensity of the exploitation of workers at Duke is typical of the treatment of labor in the South, and the treatment of hospital workers all over the country."[87] They reminded employees that "Duke is not doing us a favor by letting us work here. Instead we are doing them a favor by working for low wages."[88] Service labor, even performed at a nonprofit, was nonetheless still labor performed in exchange for a wage. To drive that point home, union organizers frequently equated Duke's tactics with those of J.P. Stevens, a local textile firm locked in a notorious and notoriously brutal union battle.[89] With such comparisons, they hoped to associate Duke with the long history and enduring legacy of class exploitation in the area and thus attract the support of local employees with working-class roots. They might then puncture the powerful narrative that, as a nonprofit

[84] "Profits at Duke," *Union Organizer*, Sept. 20, 1978, Unions Reference Collection.

[85] "Workers: Fed Up With Cafeteria Prices!," *Union Organizer*, Sept. 13, 1978, Box 134, Sanford Records.

[86] "Profits at Duke," *Union Organizer*, Sept. 20, 1978, Unions Reference Collection.

[87] *Tell It Like It Is*, June 21, 1977, Unions Reference Collection.

[88] "A Look at the Big House," *Union Organizer*, Mar. 1975, Unions Reference Collection.

[89] "Duke Hospital Union Drive Renewed," *Durham Morning Herald*, Jan. 11, 1978, clipping in Unions Reference Collection.

with imposing buildings and shiny ambitions, the university existed in a special economic realm.

According to the union, Duke's own behavior offered further evidence of the university's status as an employer and not simply a collection of do-gooders. The administration's response to unionization revealed that "the university is run by a handful of rich business people and their high-paid agents."[90] Taking their cues from business leaders like Trustee Wright Tisdale, "slick operators with plenty of experience in keeping unions out of their shops," university administrators had transformed Duke, finally and irrevocably, into just another business.[91] Now "Durham's largest employer" and "a major landlord in the Bull City," Duke had become "no different" than any other business, "infamous for its treatment" and "exploitation" of workers.[92] "Like any other boss," organizers pointed out, Duke's administration preferred to spend hundreds of thousands on management consultants to resist unionization rather than pay the university's employees ten cents more an hour.[93]

Organizers hoped to use these comparisons with business to delegitimize the university and its claims to special status. Since the early twentieth century, college administrators had fostered considerable ambiguity about the role of "business methods" in university management, an ambiguity only sharpened by their recent embrace of union-busting techniques. The union rhetoric's purchase among the targets of the campaign, especially black service workers, speaks to an ongoing skepticism of the university's special status and a deep discomfort with its power. With their success in the first campus election,

[90] "Duke Workers Form Worker's Council," clipping, Box 5, Office of the Chancellor Records, DU Archives.

[91] "United We Stand, Divided We Fall," flyer, VP Records.

[92] "Support the People's Struggle," flyer, n.d., Box 3, David M. Henderson Papers, DU Archives.

[93] "Why Are We Out Here?," Local 77 bulletin, Aug. 14, 1974, Unions Reference Collection.

union organizers were able to combine longstanding concern about the role of business in nonprofits with heightened awareness of the colossal size and influence of those nonprofits in the late twentieth century.

The struggle over Duke's special status became even more emotionally fraught when the question shifted to the special nature of a hospital in the final two union drives. During discussions with the NLRB about the initial 1972 election, President Sanford and the university's legal team argued that the NLRB should not claim jurisdiction over the hospital. Making a now-familiar argument, university policy papers argued vociferously that unions "have no place in a hospital where the main job of all of us is to look after sick people."[94] It was the hospital's duty of care, more even than its nonprofit status, that university leadership suggested was "totally inconsistent" with employee organization.[95] Moreover, Sanford seemed to want to extend this reasoning to every position in the facility, claiming that "even housekeeping was not a routine function" in a hospital.[96] These anti-union arguments were rooted in a moral political economy of care that administrators would amplify in the years to come. They continuously urged employees to "think about your job and what it means to you" because a union "would make it more difficult for employees to get real satisfaction from their work."[97] Thus, anyone who "care[d] about doing a good job" would vote no in any election.[98] Because of the special nature of the hospital, university administrators argued, a

[94] "Statement to Supervisors," n.d., Box 9, VP Records.

[95] "Description of Duke University," n.d., Box 13, VP Records.

[96] Business Meeting minutes, Sept. 3-4, 1970, Box 27, Minah Records.

[97] "Workers Asked to Choose Time of Illness," *The Union Organizer*, Mar. 23, 1976, Unions Reference Collection.

[98] Howard Goldberg, "Close to Home, Striking Logic," *The Duke Chronicle*, Nov. 12, 1976, clipping, Unions Reference Collection.

union would spell disaster not just for the institution itself but also for the psychological wellbeing of its employees.

Because Americans increasingly saw medical care as an entitlement - a 1975 survey in *Giving in America* found that Americans considered it a "right of citizenship" – public opinion was an essential prize in hospital union organizing.[99] Director of Personnel Richard Jackson consistently raised the threat of a strike to illustrate the peril a union would pose to the hospital. Given that a strike was any union's strongest negotiating tactic, a union would always be "putting those sick people's well-being on the line at the bargaining table."[100] This danger was compounded in a city like Durham, with few alternative health care providers, administrators claimed. President Sanford likewise declared himself "genuinely concerned about the impact of a union upon patient care," attempting to shift the debate from what was owed to employees to what was best for patients.[101] This argument seemed to hold sway not just with the general public, but with many workers at the Medical Center as well.[102] In fact, university handbills returned to this topic so frequently and with such ferocity as to underline its significance to their case against unionization. In ways small (parking requirements were different at a hospital) and large (the hospital had a special mission), they argued that it was nearly impossible "to compare a hospital with industry."[103] So dissimilar was the hospital to

[99] Quoted in Olivier Zunz, *Philanthropy in America: A History – Updated Edition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 237.

[100] Marianne Celano, "The Story on the Sheets: What is the 'Real Situation'?," *Aeolus*, Feb. 14, 1979, Unions Reference Collection.

[101] Sanford to Dear Colleagues, Feb. 1, 1979, Box 13, VP Records.

[102] Roscoe Robinson to Mr. Richard Jackson, Oct. 3, 1977, Confidential, Box 134, Sanford Records.

[103] "Parking at Duke," flyer, n.d., Box 134, Sanford Records.

any other kind of economic institution that "a union in our Hospital would be like communism in our nation."[104] Though administrators held out the carrot of "compensating employees in other ways," they steadfastly refused to compromise the special nature of the hospital.[105]

On the other hand, union supporters sought to redirect the rhetorical power of patient care for their own purposes. Official union publications and materials created by auxiliary support groups like Friends of Local 77 argued that it was hospitals themselves that were putting workers and patients in conflict by repressing wages and disrespecting workers. Some doctors and students publicly supported this argument. In an open letter in the *Chronicle*, seven doctors at the Medical Center argued that "patient care and worker-patient relationships are constantly strained by the poor wages, understaffing, and on-the-job harassment which historically have burdened hospital employees."[106] A 'yes' on unionization "Means Better Patient Care, a Better Hospital," the group noted in another advertisement in the student newspaper. The doctors who belonged to these support groups welcomed unionization as a guarantor of "dignity for patients and staff alike."[107] In fact, these auxiliary groups sometimes declared, the caring value of a "well-compensated, well-trained and efficient" staff was "more important" in justifying the union than even "basic human

[104] "1977 Campaign Introduction and Schedule," n.d., Box 134, Sanford Records.

[105] Gigi Hagel to Pye, Apr. 4, 1977, Box 35, VP Records.

[106] Martha Arthur, MD, et al., "Support," *Summer Chronicle*, July 6, 1978, Box 134, Sanford Records.

[107] "Its more than a Fair Shake for Employees. It Means Better Patient Care, a Better Hospital," advertisement in *The Duke Chronicle*, Feb. 15, 1979, Unions Reference Collection.

rights."[108] Although well intentioned, these rhetorical strategies could sometimes sublimate the rights of employees to the needs of patients.

Besides debates over the special requirements of patient care, administrators and activists also revived and reconfigured debates about the meaning of self-determination and the exercise of power in a university community. University administrators emphasized the sense of hearty individualism among many employees, declaring not just that they preferred to work with employees "on an individual and personal basis," but also warning direly that "people do not like to be compelled to give up the right to speak for themselves."[109] Echoing the right-to-work rhetoric popular among anti-union activists since the postwar period, administrators argued that joining a union would not empower employees but would directly strip them of their power - they would be *compelled* to join the union, *required* to pay dues, and *subject* to international control. "Are you ready to trust them with your business and personal affairs now and for the future?"[110] the university asked. It was employees who approached their supervisors "in a good manner, not in a demanding way" that had the power to make changes at Duke – a place where free debate and not force held sway.[111] Considering the satisfaction purportedly felt by these individuals, giving up that personal responsibility to a union would appear a heavy cost indeed.

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[108] Ibid.

[109] Sanford, Memorandum to Management and Supervisors of Duke University Medical Center, Jan. 6, 1978, Box 1, Ron Grunwald Papers, DU Archives.

[110] "Positive Employee Actions, 1977-1978," Box 134, Sanford Records. This rhetoric aligns quite easily with the justification for right-to-work legislation. See Elizabeth A. Fones-Wolf, *Selling Free Enterprise: The Business Assault on Labor and Liberalism, 1945-1960* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), especially 257-284; Nelson Lichtenstein and Elizabeth Shermer, eds., *The Right and Labor in America: Politics, Ideology, and Imagination* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016); and Gilbert Gal, *The Politics of Right to Work: The Labor Federations as Special Interests, 1943-1979* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 92-128.

[111] John Gilmore, letter to the editor, *Summer Chronicle*, May 16, 1978, Box 134, Sanford Records.

In contrast to the university's focus on individual agency, employee organizers emphasized that the ultimate goal of self-determination could only be achieved through collective action in the context of a massive enterprise like Duke. A union would empower workers to achieve not just a better standard of living, but "constructive input into the decision-making process."[112] After all, "in dealing with a bureaucracy of the size and arrogance of the Duke administration, the individual is almost helpless."[113] In a publication entitled "Brief History of the Organizing Drive at Duke," organizers reminded employees that there was "much suffering and humiliation because of the bad working conditions" in the 1960s and of the "double oppression" faced by black workers.[114] Each benefit they now enjoyed was "wrestle[d…] from the cold and inhuman hands of Duke" after workers themselves had "frightened Duke into a frenzy" by going out on strike.[115] Progress had been *won*, by the sweat and sacrifice of employees themselves, not gifted from a magnanimous ruler in answer to a humble entreaty. The bigger Duke grew, the less significant each employee became to them.

Thus, union sympathizers offered a fundamentally different diagnosis of the relations of power on campus and the way to have one's voice heard. It was democratic participation and collective action that could ensure people had control over their lives. Defending the value of a union in ensuring "economic justice and equal protection," activists equated an NLRB election with American democracy at work.[116] Employees in the hospital were being

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[112] "Duke University Medical Center: The Real Situation," flyer, Feb. 6, 1979, Unions Reference Collection.

[113] "Vote Yes," flyer, Feb. 15, 1979, Unions Reference Collection.

[114] "Brief History of the Organizing Drive at Duke," 1978, Box 1, Grunwald Papers.

[115] Ibid.

[116] Paul Bermanzohn, MD, Letter from Friends of Local 77, 1975, Box 26, VP Records.

denied the "simple right that all other American workers have."[117] In its broadest form, this was a plea for "a voice in running the university."[118] But, more narrowly (and more realistically), employees wanted "to be treated as first class citizens" and exercise the "right to make decisions that directly affect their lives."[119] Winning a union would thus be a gateway to full membership in the university community.

This desire for self-determination ultimately presented everyday employees as an alternative source of legitimate authority. In some union rhetoric, that could lead to a radical egalitarianism which called into question the accepted hierarchies of the knowledge economy. When employee activists denounced attempts to institute a "merit" system, they made radical critiques of a system that would privilege "merit" over effort or need. While some may have merely feared corruption in evaluating merit under "the unfair supervisor who rewarded favorites and penalized others," others sought to suggest that vast differences in status – whether based on race, education, or supposed merit – were inherently wrong.[120] "Do we work any less than our fellow worker who has [sic] received a job upgrade," they asked. "Do we have any fewer hungry mouths at home to feed?"[121] Wage increases were not simply skirmishes over a little extra cash, they were confrontations over fairness, justice, and belonging. This was the most radical aspect of activists' vision: they wanted to change

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[117] Untitled flyer, n.d., Box 13, VP Records.

[118] "Duke Workers Form Workers' Council," clipping in Unions Reference Collection.

[119] "We Want Our Rights," flyer issued by Duke University Hospital, 1199 Organizing Committee, Mar. 8, 1972, Box 134, Sanford Records; "Demonstration by Workers," New American Movement flyer, n.d., Box 12, VP Records.

[120] "Comments, Suggestions and Recommendations made by Employees During Management/Employee Coffee Hours," memorandum, Oct. 25, 1978, Box 134, Sanford Records.

[121] Untitled flyer, n.d., Unions Reference Collection.

particular policies, to be certain, but more broadly they wanted a say in establishing new standards of employee worth and deservedness.

Administrators and even many employees rejected this attempt to redefine the place of service workers on a university, phrased as it was as a critique of meritocracy. University rhetoric successfully encouraged fears about the outsized power organized service workers would have. President Sanford emphasized the threat of minority rule, warning that a union would elevate certain employees above all other constituencies and noted instead that "all have an interest in decisions affecting Duke."[122] As bargaining unit decisions transformed a struggle among service workers into a multiracial and multi-status campaign, concerns about the leveling consequences of unionization became increasingly key.

These intersecting debates – about the responsibilities of a nonprofit to the public and to its employees, about the power of an individual to achieve self-determination within an enormous enterprise, and about the place of meritocratic hierarchy in the knowledge economy – framed the terms of union organizing on Duke's campus in the 1970s. Pro- and anti-union pamphlets can, at times, read as little more than propaganda. But these debates also exposed fundamental questions about how to make a university community, and who could legitimately be a part of it.

CLASS IN THE 1970S UNIVERSITY: RACE, SKILL, AND STATUS

The union campaigns on Duke's campus offer an invaluable window into the profoundly racialized experience of class in the 1970s knowledge economy. Anti-discrimination activism and technological innovation were, at that moment, reordering some of the university's old structures of race, gender, and status. But, presented with the

[122] Sanford to members of the Duke University Community, Oct. 8, 1970, Box 13, VP Records.

possibility of unionization, Duke employees responded in a variety of different ways that spoke not just to how they understood their present status in the university and how they imagined their futures, but also how they interpreted their pasts. Though not determinative in itself, Duke's history of hierarchy based on race and gender played a central role in employee organizing during the decade.

Channeling the continued spirit of 1960s organizing, black service workers again led the efforts to win collective bargaining rights in three out of those four elections. In these campaigns, employee leaders framed wage demands as questions of racial fairness and justice, rather than simply dollars and cents. They charged Duke with running a dehumanizing and paternalistic system that "destroys a worker's dignity and self-esteem, qualities essential for realization of full personhood."[123] One flyer demanded that employees must "really walk tall" and "support our leaders who are bringing us out of Babylon (Duke)," using religious imagery to cast the university and its leaders as villains of biblical proportions.[124] Employees were, in short, tired of "plead[ing]" for "what is rightfully theirs."[125] Black student supporters summed up the thinking among ardent unionists when they proclaimed that "black workers on this campus shall not at the expense of their families and their well-being donate labor to Duke. Either exploitation shall cease or Duke shall cease."[126] For these activists, the question was not about the university's balance sheet, nor even about the fiscal demands on an institution supposedly operating in the interest of the

[123] "Case Studies," pamphlet, May 13, 1968, Unions Reference Collection.

[124] "The Day We Filed," flyer, Box 13, VP Records.

[125] "Support the People's Struggle," n.d. Box 3, Henderson Papers.

[126] News release, Association of African Students, Jan. 25, 1972, Box 13, VP Records.

public good, but a question about the costs to personal and community dignity being borne by the poorest within that institution.

In the boldest link to earlier civil rights organizing, black activists continued to develop and deploy the imagery of enslavement and liberation. Organizers and activists from several employee organizations continued to use the word "plantation" as shorthand for a system of racial and economic exploitation at Duke, a system of dehumanizing servitude. Local 77's newsletter, as well as publications from leftist worker offshoots, explicitly cast university administrators as owners, and university managers as overseers.[127] At times organizers drew explicit connections to the Old South, decrying the "plantation conditions" and "slave wages" employees were paid.[128] Raises were mere pennies thrown out by "your Plantation Owner" to "keep the slaves quiet and hoping for more."[129] In the two later campaigns, Local 77's newsletters prominently featured a section titled "A Look at the Big House from the Field," and they and other publications brimmed with references to "slaves" on the "old plantation."[130]

At other times employee activists referenced the specter of slavery more subtly, linking it with broader claims to black pride and self-determination. Were employees "ready to walk the halls of Duke University, tall, *free* and proud men and women?"[131] One worker

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[127] Examples abound. See *Local 77 Bulletin*, July 22, 1974, Unions Reference Collection; *The Union Organizer*, Jan. 14, 1976, Unions Reference Collection; flyer, n.d., Box 13, VP Records.

[128] "1199-D Union Meeting," Duke & Watts Hospitals, Box 5, Chancellor Records; "Why Are We Out Here?," Local 77 Bulletin, Aug. 14, 1974, Unions Reference Collection.

[129] "Wake Up Rip Van Winkle," flyer, Box 5, Chancellor Records.

[130] See collection of Local 77 Newsletters in Unions Reference Collection; *The Union Organizer*, Jan. 14, 1976, Unions Reference Collection (quotes).

[131] "Freedom and Justice," flyer, Box 5, Chancellor Records.

protested that we "are people […and] not 'things' that pick up the trash, mop floors, move furniture, etc," while others accused supervisors of treating them like "beasts of burden" and "keeping us in our harnesses."[132] Personifying the university in the role of owner, they spoke of the danger they faced "if we don't measure up to Mr. Duke's expectations."[133] Yet, even when such appeals were more veiled, they clearly invoked feelings of dehumanization and labor exploitation in ways that hardly obscured their meaning. When they decorated a "Vote Yes" flyer with an image of little people breaking their chains, organizers deliberately sought to link the drive for unionization with liberation and emancipation.[134] If Duke was a "plantation" and the conditions they labored under akin to "slavery," union organizers argued that freedom would come through collective action.

The rhetoric of slavery remained especially powerful for some among the university's black service employees who continued to confront daily acts of racism. One doctor was notorious for using what he called "racial humor" in conversation with his black staff and patients. In the face of this ongoing behavior, and after he pointed "out the 'merits' of slavery in the presence of patients," a recently fired black clerical worker filed a grievance protesting her treatment.[135] A black RN corroborated her account, noting that "his slurs were intended to remind Black people to 'stay in their places.'"[136] Though employees acknowledged that

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[132] "Who Are We? Why Are We Out Here?," Local 77 Bulletin, July 22, 1974, Unions Reference Collection; one example found in "A Look at the Big House from the Field," *Local 77 Newsletter*, Aug. 1, 1974, Union Reference Collection; "All in Duke's Family," *Progress Worker*, Feb. 14, 1973, Don Roy Papers.

[133] *WAM newsletter*, Feb. 1975, Unions Reference Collection.

[134] "Vote Yes," flyer, n.d., Unions Reference Collection.

[135] "Clementine Price Wins Grievance, Exposes Racist Tactics in Oral Surgery," *Organizer*, July 14, 1976, Unions Reference Collection.

[136] Ibid.

some progress had been made in addressing ongoing problems with bigoted supervisors, experiences such as this one exposed the persistent degradation many black employees faced at Duke.

Even conflicts among employee activists highlighted the significance of civil rights imagery for those involved the union campaigns at Duke. For the most part, these conflicts represented a struggle among a small number of leftist radicals over organizing tactics and Marxist ideology. But these, too, were often filtered for public consumption through more familiar tropes of racial solidarity. For a time, two organizations were active in unionization drives on campus: 1199D and Local 77 of the AFSCME.[137] Organizers for 1199D sought to undermine Oliver Harvey, founding member of Local 77, by chastising him as "local Uncle Tom, Mr. Harvey" for having become suspiciously friendly with university management.[138] They would later call 77 "the silent partners of the Duke Bosses" and identify other workers by name as "Uncle Toms who lick the Bosses feet."[139] For the radical organizers working at Duke in the early 1970s, the class conflict on campus was inseparable from the fraught history of racial oppression, resistance, and, where applicable, betrayal.

But if civil rights were a galvanizing force in the first union campaign on campus, a reaction against black progress served to unite white employees in the second campaign. Shortly after the mostly-black service workers voted to unionize in 1971, the university's white maintenance employees filed for a union election in which gendered whiteness came to

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[137] 1199D was an outpost of the National Union of Hospital and Healthcare Employees, whereas Local 77 was affiliated with AFSCME. 1199 did not spend much time in Durham. See Sacks, *Caring by the Hour*, 54-55.

[138] "Workers Say No Sellout!!!!," flyer, Box 9, VP Records. It does seem that Harvey was talking with administrators. See Leah Wise, "Stirring the Pot: Oliver Harvey's Narrative Account of the Struggle to Organize Duke University," (master's thesis, Duke University, Mar. 1980).

[139] "To All Duke Medical Center Employees," flyer, Box 13, VP Records.

play a key role.[140] These employees responded ambivalently when the Board of Trustees increased the wages of the university's lowest-paid workers after the 1968 strike, reducing the wage difference between them and the newly elevated black workers. "Essentially all of our personnel are upset and considerably worked up," maintenance manager Ken Howard warned.[141]

Though they may have been "worked up," it was not immediately clear to administrators whether they should fear more sustained organizing. Within only a few months of the establishment of the Employee Council in 1968, maintenance employees requested that their representation be severed from that of service employees. This move reaffirmed distinctions between campus service and maintenance workers, which provided heartening reassurance to administrators. Buoyed by the apparent animosity between maintenance and service workers, manager T. K. Howard offered Huestis a rosy diagnosis of the situation within his department in 1970, when he noted a "pronounced decline in Union interest" and argued that "we have good reason to expect loyalty and active support" should the need arise.[142]

In the end, that racial competition seemed to propel unionization. Maintenance workers changed their mind when they witnessed the service workers secure a NLRB-supervised election. As election victory seemed increasingly likely for service workers, maintenance employees "served notice that they would respond to recognition by the

[140] Though the department employed a number of African-Americans as "helpers" and in certain trades, white men continued to dominate in both numbers and in high-status positions.

[141] Howard to Huestis, July 17, 1969, Box 6, VP Records.

[142] Howard to Huestis, Jan. 19, 1970, Box 44, Minah Records.

University of any 'black-oriented' union by recourse to a 'union of their own.'"[143] One of the leaders of the movement later softened the sentiment a bit in conversation with sociology faculty member and union supporter Jack Preiss, "We figure if the blacks can get what they want, so can we."[144] Maintenance workers would reach for a mechanism of class power in order to shore up their racial status on campus.

In this campaign, both organizers and anti-union administrators deployed thinly veiled allusions to racial competition to buttress maintenance workers' status as skilled craftsmen. In a letter addressed "Dear Maintenance Employee" and delivered to the homes of these employees, Business Manager James Adams appealed directly to their sense of pride and masculine independence, entreating employees to reject unionization on those grounds. "SKILLED WORKERS HAVE ALWAYS PRIDED THEMSEVES IN BEING INDIVIDUALS," his missive roared. "HAVE SOME PEOPLE ONLY REACTED BECAUSE OTHER EMPLOYEES HAVE JOINED A UNION?"[145] Unlike unskilled service workers, Adams suggested, maintenance employees possessed both the capacity and the responsibility to embody the ideal of rugged, masculine individualism. Other managers similarly asked that employees "exercise your own intelligence and make a considered

[143] Huestis, Memorandum, Box 9, VP Records.

[144]Sacks, *Caring by the Hour*, 56. Interestingly, Windham cites another portion of this same quote in her book: "I don't mind saying the blacks showed the way and I admire them for it. I don't think we could have taken the lead on our own." She deploys it as evidence of both a renewed rights-consciousness and the promises of a "bridge" over racial divisions. However, not only does she mischaracterize the circumstances a bit, her omission of the part of the statement immediately preceding the quoted portion in her text significant reshapes the tenor of the statement. Windham, *Knocking on Labor's Door*, 47.

[145] Adams to Dear Maintenance Employee, Nov. 22, 1972, Box 26, VP Records.

decision that is best for you as an individual."[146] If maintenance workers were strong and independent – if they were real, skilled men – they would vote no when election day came.

While many maintenance employees seemed, in fact, to adopt this self-perception, it did not quell union organizing as administrators hoped. Rather than undermine unionization, these feelings inspired a particular, and ultimately successful, framework for organizing. Maintenance workers argued that the university's treatment of them was "an insult to these highly skilled maintenance employees."[147] They emphasized the new power and inflated value now enjoyed by campus service workers. Unionization was a way to reaffirm their skilled class status and guarantee that maintenance workers, too, could demand the administration's ear. Duke's campus maintenance employees had come to embrace unionization and reaffirm their class status vis-à-vis the bosses, but only by embracing a traditional and defensive definition of skill and status. That particular manifestation of class identity was compatible with, and even sometimes driven by, racialized competition with those working in service roles.

The two hospital campaigns in the second half of the decade created a third, more complex interplay between race, status, and unionization. In part, this was a function of timing. As the hospital campaigns got underway in 1974, many activists, veterans of earlier efforts themselves, concentrated on organizing the predominantly black service workers and again highlighted themes of racial exploitation. Many of these employees had demonstrated enthusiasm for unionization for years. But, the conditions of the hospital drive also posed new challenges to organizers. As the decade wore on, the rhetorical strategies of old proved

[146] Harry Ebert to Fellow Employee, Nov. 30, 1972, Box 26, VP Records.

[147] Friends and Members of Local 465 to All Employees, Visitors, and Patients, memorandum, Box 26, VP Records.

increasingly untenable. Members of the public had begun to express their distaste with 'radical' talk, placing in question some traditional avenues of support. For instance, the YMCA protested to organizer Maureen May that she had misled them in requesting the use of a room for a meeting. The Associate General Director of the YMCA "was shocked to learn that your group was distributing circulars among Duke employees which indicated a 'mass' meeting of Duke people to 'fight' Duke, accusing Duke administrative personnel of 'lying,' of wanting to *enslave* employees."[148] Though the associate general director maintained that she supported the principle of unionization, she could not abide what she considered a destructive and nihilistic approach to organizing.

Public distaste for radicalism notwithstanding, union organizers' biggest challenge was the sudden inclusion of nearly one thousand, mostly white clerical workers in the bargaining unit. Even though some organizers had attempted to forge connections across race before 1976, none were pleased with the ruling that mandated it. The union viewed the NLRB's decision to include white clerical workers in the bargaining unit as no less than a "subtle act of racism."[149] Service workers would now unfairly and illogically "be grouped together with the well-fed administrative secretaries who guard the carpeted corporate suites."[150] Voicing the crux of their unhappiness, activists described the division in racialized class terms: would the "ground sirloin and yogurt people" outweigh the wishes of the "soup

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[148] Jack Martin, Associate General Director, YMCA, to Miss Maureen May, Apr. 19, 1977, Box 36, VP Records.

[149] Kathy Sorely, "Workers split on vote; results still in doubt," *The Duke Chronicle*, Nov. 17, 1976, clipping, Union Reference Collection. Southern employers had a history of specifically advocating for interracial bargaining units so that they could use race baiting to prevent unionization. See Korstad, *Civil Rights Unionism*, 134.

[150] "Solidarity For Now," flyer, Nov. 16, 1976, Unions Reference Collection.

bone and beans crowd"?[151] Over the course of two years, employee organizers and administrators relitigated many of the same arguments that had driven the previously successful unionization campaign on campus – about the nature of the institution, about the rights of citizenship, and about the role of race and gender in understanding one's place on campus. Who got to supply the answer to these questions made all the difference.

To reach out to white female clerical workers, organizers and supporters appealed to democratic participation in ways that linked gender and racial oppression. Though these appeals had the potential to reach all manner of employees, activists and organizers clearly hoped they would help bridge the apparent status divide between clerical and service workers. One advocate, Dolores Janiewski, was a history graduate student and had formerly worked as a secretary. Janiewski addressed clerical workers through the lens of her own past experience, writing that "so long as you have no voice in working conditions, you lack a democratic right fully as crucial as the right to vote for a president."[152] She implored secretaries in particular to understand that "so long as [their] only security is the good will and/or whim of [their] supervisor," they would continue to fulfill "subservient stereotypes" about women.[153]

Organizers also emphasized themes of exploitation, disrespect, and abuse in more generalized terms. They "compared Duke to a 'large monster eating workers one by one'" and referred to the university as "Duke the Grinch."[154] Individual employees had little power

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[151] Ibid.

[152] Dolores Janiewski, "Love It or Leave It," *Aeolus: The Chronicle's Weekly Magazine*, Feb. 14, 1979.

[153] Ibid.

[154] Clipping, July 19, 1975, Don Roy Papers, DU Archives; "Demonstration by Duke Workers," *NAM flyer*, Box 12, VP Records.

in the face of supervisors and administrators with absolute authority, particularly when it seemed that those supervisors seemed to spend their time "thinking of ways" to make employees "cower before him as though he were king."[155] Employees complained about arbitrary rules, supervised bathroom breaks, and sick leave policy, but overall they resented being treated like "children."[156] White women, they thought, were just as resentful of infantilizing treatment from supervisors and administrators.

Beyond using more racially neutral imagery, some organizers attempted to attract prospective white allies more explicitly by confronting the question of race head on. They argued that "if you pull wires or if you push a cart, you've got more in common with other working folk, black or white, than you do with the […] doctors, or the administrators."[157] "We can all be slaves no matter what color we are," clerical worker Amy Lloyd put it more bluntly.[158] Lloyd's attempt to reconcile white workers to the metaphor of slavery reveals the new challenges facing union organizers. Many within the union's base of supporters among the low-wage, mostly African American, service workers continued to see slavery as a powerful, and apt, descriptor of their relationship with their supervisors and with Duke as an institution. Yet organizers also feared that such rhetoric risked alienating white workers, particularly white women within the clerical ranks, who were now crucial to the drive's ultimate success.

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[155] Ronald Hargis, "A Worker's Perspective of Duke: Fight for Human Treatment," *The Duke Chronicle*, Dec. 7, 1978.

[156] "Dietetics," clipping, Mar. 1975, Unions Reference Collection.

[157] "Union Talk Haunts Bosses," *Progress Worker*, Feb. 14, 1973, Roy Papers.

[158] Amy Lloyd, "Voice of a Worker: Let Us Not Be Slaves," n.d., clipping, Unions Reference Collection.

Lloyd's rhetoric reveals that, even as the circumstances of organizing in the hospital became more racially fraught with the inclusion of white female clerical workers in the bargaining unit, the union never fully abandoned the metaphor of slavery. In fact, many organizers found it to be entirely compatible with the increasingly prominent and racially neutral discussions of the nature of the individual in a system of power; a useful shorthand for overriding feelings of helplessness and vulnerability. Without a union, one organizer claimed, "we'll always have people living as slaves."[159] Just as before, these critiques were aimed not solely at the material facts of the employee relationship at Duke, but also at the relations of power there. Moreover, organizers did not want to dismiss the concerns of the black service workers who still made up the vast majority of the union's constituency. The hospital organizing drive was, in many ways, an extension of the campus election of 1972, itself an extension of the strike-era organizing, which was, after all, a class-based movement for racial liberation. Thus, reporters for the union newsletters tried to balance appeals to interracial solidarity with efforts to inspire, educate, and celebrate a valued constituency with features like the regular "black history" column.[160] Struggling to strike the most effective balance, organizers confronted a complex set of challenges posed by these competing impulses. It was a tactical debate that was exacerbated by the long-running pattern of racial segregation in employment at Duke.

Despite their efforts to build support among white clerical workers, most organizers continued to despair at the prospect of winning their votes. Hospital clerical workers had not

[159] "Labor Launches Duke Hospital Union Drive," Anvil, Jan. 13, 1978, Box 1, Grunwald Papers.

[160] See, for instance, "Black History: The Negro Convention Movement," *Local 77 Newsletter*, September 1974.

even participated regularly in the old Employee Council.[161] Organizers feared that the divisions between service workers and clerical workers were more than just rhetorical. Those divisions were grounded in divergent material interests and experiences that had long existed in Southern society and had been solidified on campus through years of racially-based employment practices. Black women had only recently begun to enter the ranks of clerical work at Duke, and remained concentrated in the supposedly unskilled positions of DTOs. As a group, DTOs were overwhelmingly supportive of the union.[162] But for years, the university's labor system explicitly meted out different racial and class statuses among clerical and service workers within the public household. While white clerical workers earned "too little money to live comfortably and securely" and were "still ordered around on their jobs as if they were only 'girls' or were too stupid," which could theoretically have made them amenable to organization, they still did "get slightly higher pay and status than service workers."[163] Despite their personal enthusiasm for the union project, even organizers and advocates like Lloyd and Janiewski worried that most clerical workers would resist collective action. And resist they did, sending the union to defeat in the first hospital election.

In the second hospital election, organizers expended far more effort to build a base of support within the clerical ranks. They revived criticisms of the boss-secretary relationship, arguing that it revealed the universal position of women as "servants and/or sex objects."[164] More effectively, the union also cultivated a cadre of committed clerical workers to speak to

[161] Employees Council Newsletter, Jan. 30, 1970, Box 35, VP Records.

[162] Sacks, *Caring by the Hour*, 57-9, 100-104.

[163] Untitled clipping, Union Reference Collection; "Editorial: National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) Decision on Union at Duke," *Tell It Like It Is* 57 (Nov. 26, 1975), Box 5, Chancellor Records, DU Archives.

[164] "International Working Women's Day," *Tell It Like It Is* 62 (Mar. 8, 1976), Unions Reference Collection.

their own colleagues directly. Women like Merlette Hargis and Gladys Glenn formed the Duke Medical Centers (DMC) Clericals for AFSCME and undertook a public relations campaign aimed at developing a feminist critique of the university, dispelling negative rumors about unions, and confronting the university's powerfully effective propaganda.

These women understood the fraught racialized class antagonisms among white clerical workers and mostly sidestepped discussions of civil rights in favor of what they saw as shared experiences and mainstream feminist values. In an open letter to "Duke Medical Center Clerical Employees," DMC Clericals acknowledged that "many of you are opposed to becoming a part of a local union which includes service workers," which they called "understandable to a certain extent."[165] "BUT," they declared, "we all do have common goals," namely "to have a voice in our future and to do our part in providing the best in patient care as can be attained."[166] They assured clerical workers that the union was committed first and foremost to "making this Medical Center a better place in which to work" by tackling "issues that involve all employees" like wages, sick leave, employee health, retirement, and others.[167] Publicly acknowledging both the fact that "she never thought she'd join a union" and that she now had, women like Merlette Hargis hoped to appropriate existing skepticism among white-collar clerical workers.[168] When administrators later tried to discredit Hargis by disclosing in a letter to the *Chronicle* that she was married to a steward for Local 465, she returned to the language of feminism to accuse Personnel

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[165] DMC Clericals for AFSCME, "An Open Letter to Duke Medical Center Clerical Employees," *The Duke Chronicle,* Jan. 11, 1978, Unions Reference Collection.

[166] Ibid.

[167] Ibid.; "From Secretarial Representatives of AFSCME Organizing Committee to Medical Center Secretaries," *Union Organizer*, Apr. 26, 1978, Box 134, Sanford Records.

[168] Gladys Glenn, letter to the editor, *The Duke Chronicle*, Nov. 1, 1978, Unions Reference Collection.

Director Richard Jackson of demeaning and belittling her. "Duke's message to me and all women is clear," Hargis declared, "we must all think as our husbands think and do as our husbands do."[169] Like Lloyd and Janiewski before them, Hargis and the other women of DMC Clericals sought to convince clerical workers of their vulnerable status, in part by translating the union's critique of the university into less radical and racially fraught terms.

As union sympathizers among the clerical class grew more vocal and confrontational, however, so too did resistance from their peers. Many expressed particular sympathy with the university's rhetoric about individuality and power. Mrs. Joan Lunsford, a secretary, wrote to the secretarial representatives of AFSCME to protest their efforts. She was "not the slightest bit interested" in their materials, nor were "most of those who consider themselves and are secretarial workers."[170] Declaring herself "perfectly capable" of negotiating on her own, she too suggested that the fault for dissatisfaction lay with the workers themselves. After all, she had "changed jobs within the Duke system until I found one that paid me what I thought I was worth."[171]

Even women like Hargis and Glenn knew they were in for an uphill battle. They believed that some clerical workers simply did not "have the same interests" as service workers.[172] At least some clerical workers had long benefited from status and wage privileges and from proximity to power. For instance, when the university instituted a temporary salary freeze in 1969, numerous faculty and doctors wrote to protest its effect on their "most

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[169] Merlette Hargis, letter to the editor, *The Duke Chronicle*, Nov. 1, 1978, Unions Reference Collection.

[170] Mrs. Joan Lunsford, Secretary, to Secretarial Representatives of AFSCME Organizing Committee, May 1, 1978, Box 134, Sanford Records.

[171] Ibid.

[172] "Hospital Workers Protest," *The Duke Chronicle*, Apr. 20, 1978.

valued" clerical employees.[173] Dr. James Wyngaarden warned of the "morale-shattering" effect that this would have on those he deemed "key individuals who make the departments and this institution move."[174] These powerful, academic advocates rallied to the defense of those closest to them, citing their long service, experience, and proven "loyalty" to Duke. Prompted by these concerns, the Personnel Department frequently reassessed the status of high-ranking clerical workers. What some critics increasingly saw as an outdated and demeaning relation of subordination – the doctor-secretary relationship – still *felt* to others as a source of both pride and power.

Some clerical workers went further in their defense of the university, becoming counter-organizers. Calling herself one of "the loyal Duke workers," Administrative Secretary Rachel Salter rallied others like her to "speak out against some of the lies" being propagated, particularly by the pro-union clerical group.[175] Mrs. Gwen Cleary, secretary to Dr. Jennings, wrote to Personnel Director Jackson offering her assistance in "publicizing the 'truth' about the union." She would "rather change professions than join a union."[176] Moreover, she and others included high-ranking members of Duke's leadership as addressees in these missives, suggesting both that they were committed to actively working against the unionization efforts and that they hoped to be recognized for doing so. These white clerical workers' complaints about the union substantially echoed the university's propaganda about individuality and autonomy. The performative aspect of their protests also suggests a latent

[173] Dr. James Wyngaarden to Linke, July 18, 1968, Box 7, VP Records.

[174] Ibid.

[175] Rachel Salter, Administrative Secretary to All Duke Employees, May 21, 1976, Box 52, VP Records.

[176] Mrs. Gwen Cleary, Secretary to Robert B. Jennings, M.D., to Richard Jackson, Nov. 4, 1977, Box 144, Sanford Records.

status anxiety raised by the prospect of being joined in a union with black service workers. The more their status seemed to be equated with those below them in the hierarchy, the louder their protestations became.

Female clerical workers who executed this virulent and multi-pronged defiance of unionization appealed to a class status that was built upon racial and gendered hierarchy. Professing herself "astounded" and "appalled" at the union's efforts to undermine the "pride and dignity" of working at Duke, Ann Bowen, a transcriptionist, careened between appeals to respectability and expressions of dismay:

> "What is so dignified about staging a walk-out and walking in a picket line in front of the most outstanding medical center and teaching institution in the Southeast?…[they] jeer at you and hurl insults because you are proud of what you do in your job at Duke….intelligent people at Duke don't need help!….If we want a raise, we know we can ask for it and if we are worthy, we will get it!….We are grown, decent people working for Duke Hospital because we know of the positively fantastic things that Duke is doing to help PEOPLE LIVE and the QUALITY OF THAT LIVING…[there are] plenty of people in this town who would love to work here and be a part (no matter how small) of Duke University Medical Center."[177]

If Bowen were indeed a member of a new pink-collar proletariat, no one had yet informed her. Loyal and capable – as well as pink-collar and white - Lunsford, Cleary, and Bowen were not the *kind* of people who needed a union.

The history of clerical resistance to unionization at Duke offers a historically significant counterpoint to the wave of successful university clerical unionization elsewhere.[178] A chief factor that seems to have set Duke's case apart from these others is the

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[177] Ann Bowen, Transcriptionist, to Jackson, Box 134, Sanford Records. Sociologist Karen Sacks, in her fascinating study of the two hospital drives, suggests that women's different work cultures depending on their job status fundamentally shaped their response to unionization. Sacks, *Women, Work, and Organizing*.

[178] Despite fierce resistance, Cobble has suggested that 70% of university clerical elections were successful. See Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement*, 222. See also Richard Hurd, The Unionization of Clerical Workers in Colleges and Universities: A status Report*," in Proceedings of the Seventeenth Annual Conference of the National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education*, J.M. Douglas ed., (Washington D.C.: National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education): 315-327; John Hoerr, *We*

nature of the bargaining unit. Whereas clerical workers at Yale and Harvard organized organically with other white-collar workers like technicians, Duke's clerical workers were asked to join a pre-existing campaign rooted in civil rights unionism. Efforts to build solidarity among clerical and service workers at Duke were met with harsh resistance, grounded in a gendered and racialized class identity. In their responses to union overtures, many white-collar workers consistently expressed concerns about belonging to a union that combined "secretaries [and] housekeepers."[179] While several women among this cohort joined the union heartily, embracing feminist and class-based critiques of university authority, most had never asked to be grouped with black service workers, and heartily rejected the suggestion.

Taken together, these campaigns reveal the power of black organizing and the resistance to class solidarity among white workers. In the case of white male maintenance workers, status anxiety and racial competition helped encourage unionization. On the other hand, white female clerical workers on Duke's campus responded ambivalently to the organizing opportunities opened by the *Cornell* decision. Some made feminist critiques of the sexual dynamics of clerical work and found common cause with black service workers against Duke's managerial authority. Others rebuffed unionization, emphasizing their status as respectable, and respected, members of a special community.

Can't Eat Prestige: The Women Who Organized Harvard (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997); and Windham, *Knocking on Labor's Door*, 152-177.

[179] Gordon T. Morris, Secretary to Jacqueline C. Hijams, MD, to Gentleman, May 15, 1978, Box 134, Sanford Records.

ASSESSING THE MEANING OF FAILURE AND DEFEAT

These four union elections on Duke's campus help explain the existence of vast disparities within universities today. Buoyed by contemporary social movements and creative organizing, black service workers fundamentally challenged the racial scripts of the public household at Duke and forced the university to adopt more formal labor structures and wage rates in line with community minimums. This was a monumental achievement when measured against the conditions under which they labored a mere two decades before. However, Duke administrators managed to stave off both more widespread unionization and a more trenchant reordering of authority and status on campus.

Union organizers did not enjoy the widespread support from students, faculty, and members of the public that the 1968 strike did, reminding us of the unreliable and intermittent nature of middle-class white support for projects to challenge labor exploitation. Over the course of the four union elections, regular faculty supporters again offered succor, but their numbers were few. With rare exceptions, support in the hospital was even more anemic. Though some doctors and administrators strove to appear above the fray, others, like Professor of Medicine Joseph Greenfield, pressed President Sanford to take an even harsher line, arguing that labor unions and liberals were liable to "be responsible for the ultimate destruction of the Republic."[180] The student newspaper, *The Chronicle*, offered relatively sympathetic coverage to the organizing drive, as it had in the past. Another student publication, *Aerolus*, presented the "two sides" of the argument but characterized the "attitude prevailing at Duke" as "paternalism."[181] Despite this coverage, student reporter T.J.

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[180] Joseph C. Greenfield, Jr., MD, Professor of Medicine, to Sanford, Feb. 12, 1979, Box 134, Sanford Records.

[181] David Odell, "Around Campus, Organizing Labor; Two Sides," *Aerolus*, clipping in Unions Reference Collection.

Maroon declared that there was "little official campus support or the union" among faculty and students. In one student survey, eight out of twenty-five declared themselves supportive, and three out of twenty-five opposed, leaving more than fifty percent disinterested or undecided.[182] It was 1978, ten years and at least two whole university cycles after the vigil, and Duke students had mostly lost interest in rebellion or revolution.[183]

Moreover, for all of the changes that employees managed to achieve, the university environment, not unlike those in the profit sector, remained stubbornly resistant to egalitarianism. Administrators and many employees both continued to demand that any changes to wage and salary build in an understanding of "the relative worth of jobs."[184] As wage increases were instituted after the vigil, managers complained that they could not "maintain appropriate spreads between various levels."[185] Dining hall manager, Ted Minah, cautioned Huestis to "keep a more realistic perspective on the value of these lesser skilled jobs," which he deemed easy to staff, and asserted that low maximum wages for these jobs actually kept employees honest.[186] Employees might, he reasoned, be more likely to take part in training programs and upgrading schemes if they knew that entry level jobs would never

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[182] T.J. Maroon, "Little Official Campus Support for the Union," *Aeolus*, Feb. 14, 1979, clipping in Unions Reference Collection.

[183] As with an older narrative of working-class culture in the 1970s, historians have begun to revise the assertion that students as a group were atomized and conservative in the decade. See J. Zeitz, "Rejecting the Center: Radical Grassroots Politics in the 1970s – Second Wave Feminism as a Case Study," *Journal of Contemporary History* 43, no. 4 (2008): 673-688; Kieran Walsh Taylor, "Turn to the Working Class: the New Left, Black Liberation and the U.S. Labor Movement, 1967-1981" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2007); Peter Levy, *The New Left and Labor in the 1960s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 108-121, 147-166. Still, even these scholars acknowledge the numbers of those interested in radical politics or working-class issues had shrunk considerably. For the classic study of 1970s conservatism, see Bruce Schulman, *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics* (New York: Free Press, 2001).

[184] Weaver to Huestis, Oct. 12, 1970, Box 9, VP Records.

[185] "A Review of Duke's Relationship with Its Nonacademic Employees," n.d., Box 100, Sanford Records.

[186] Minah to Linke, July 10, 1970, Box 46, Minah Records.

offer them a living wage.[187] Confronted with these complaints, Huestis conceded that the initial changes in 1968 and 1969 had caused "compression in the lower range," but, he argued, they were now concentrated "on building back in more equitable relationships between the various job levels."[188]

Employees themselves were invested in the preservation of wage (and status) hierarchies. One employee spokesperson protested that, under a system that strictly granted minimum wage increases, "those employees in-between low and high wages are held down."[189] Librarians complained about being "declassed" if they were given raises in the same wave as clerical workers.[190] One secretary wrote directly to Huestis to complain that it was unjust to raise the salaries of people who had not done a good enough job to earn raises on their own merit while denying raises to those who had already been raised above the new wage limits.[191] Minah cautioned his superiors of unrest if his cooks and bakers were to "be grouped down with people that they have formerly outranked."[192] The university's highly stratified internal labor structure exacerbated this tendency towards relative class status. Its workforce was engaged in a great diversity of *kinds* of work, and administrators had facilitated the proliferation of job classifications, including, at one point, over a hundred

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[187] Ibid.

[188] Huestis to Anlyan, Aug. 6, 1969, Box 6, VP Records.

[189] Eston Betts, "Statement on General Wage Increases," Non-Academic Employee's Council, June 12, 1969, Box 10, VP Records.

[190] DeVyver to Knight, Feb. 18, 1966, Box 16, Knight Records.

[191] June Perry to William Anlyan, Aug. 13, 1974, Box 12, VP Records.

[192] Minah to Linke, July 10, 1970, Box 46, Minah Records.

different clerical classifications.[193] A series of "professional" job classification studies had managed to paper over without truly challenging the gendered and racialized history of those job titles and hierarchies. For some employees, unionization represented a threat not just to administrative authority but also to their own carefully policed statuses. NLRB rulings exacerbated the challenges to unionization when they ignored the power of those very same historical hierarchies to create "communities of interest."

In the end, many employees continued to argue that Duke fed off of black Durham, practicing a systematically racist form of labor exploitation. Into the 1980s, university administrators lamented that "Duke is still referred to as a 'plantation employer' and many black employees believe racism has anything but vanished once the outer veneer is removed."[194] Though deriding it as a "subjective impression," administrators had come to understand that such feelings were "symptomatic of a deeper problem" than could be solved by a simple wage increase.[195] The metaphor of slavery had sticking power because it captured so potently the racialized class relations that still lay at the heart of service work on campus.

Service workers, in seeking to upend these relations, saw unions as one of the most powerful tools at their disposal, but not the only one. Even before the formal organizing drive gained steam, employees were leveraging what power they could to squeeze concessions from the university. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, that power was vested primarily in the federal government. At the behest of complaining employees, the Department of Labor and

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[193] "Report of the Committee on Review of the Job Classification Study and the Wage and Salary Survey," c. 1961, Box 16, J. Deryl Hart Records, DU Archives.

[194] "Local 77 1981 Negotiations Confidential," report, Box 47, VP Records.

[195] Andrew Wallace to Anlyan, July 19, 1982, Box 53, VP Records.

the EEOC undertook a number of investigations of Duke's employment practices. Many policy changes eventually undertaken by the university were in fact propelled by the latent threat of these federal agencies and Duke workers' willingness to invoke their power. Perhaps the most significant of these changes was the university's affirmative action program, which launched several job upgrading schemes. Administrators like VP Huestis had the power of the federal government squarely in mind when they adopted a more proactive approach to executing those policies.[196]

But such tactics did not necessarily supplant support of unions or collective action. In fact, as one outside consultant warned, many employees saw complaints to federal agencies as one prong in a "combined effort here to support a union drive."[197] And despite several devastating election losses, these "combined" efforts did actually lead to major changes in the work lives of employees at Duke. Most of the university's personnel modernization plans were motivated at least as much by employee unrest and federal pressure as by sincere commitment to redressing its history of discrimination and exploitation. When Vice President for Health Affairs William Anlyan boasted of the PEP program to University Trustee Henry Rauch, he listed it as "one of many activities being developed by my colleagues both in the Medical Center and in the University to take steam out of the union organizers."[198] Likewise, many of the Personnel Department's other projects were designed explicitly to "develop employee loyalty to Duke" after the 1968 strike.[199]

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[196] Educational Administration Advisory Group, minutes, Mar. 10, 1971, Box 32, Divinity School Records, DU Archives.

[197] Crothers to Rauch, Personal and Confidential, Nov. 4, 1969, Box 7, VP Records.

[198] Anlyan to Rauch, Oct. 30, 1969, Box 6, VP Records.

[199] Linke to Robert Tuthill, Dec. 8, 1969, Box 7, VP Records.

Invited by employees themselves, federal oversight was largely unwelcome to university administrators across the nation. Such meddling, one college President lamented, was threatening to "destroy [the] cherished originality and diversity" of higher education.[200] Offering a glancing acknowledgment of "social justice and equal opportunity [as] worthy goals," he protested that they should not become the "'highest single priority' for federal assistance to higher education," blaming the fad for "burdensome record-keeping and offensive government supervision."[201] By considering changes in federal oversight through the lens of the longer history of campus labor politics, we can correct the unfortunate tendency to idealize the university's own past. To a certain extent, federal oversight came at the behest of employees tired of the less than "happy informality" that plagued their working lives and fed up with the university's unwillingness to change itself.[202]

CONCLUSION

The unionization drives at Duke during the 1970s represented a struggle over the meaning of service and profit in the nation's universities and hospitals. Employees sought better wages and working conditions, but they also sought to upend the hierarchies of race and gender that historically structured campus life. They confronted the relations of power and status which justified the paying of "poverty wages" to anybody that labored in the service of knowledge. [203] By doing so, activists raised significant questions about the university's special status and its local responsibilities. But they won only a partial victory. In

[200] Dallin H. Oaks, President, Brigham Young University, "A Private University Looks at Government Regulation," address to the National Association of College and University Attorneys, June 18, 1976, Box 57, VP Records.

[201] Ibid.

[202] "State of the University," Box 14, VP Records.

[203] Harvey to Sanford, May 8, 1970, Box 35, Sanford Records.

its efforts to prevent unionization, Duke embraced even more fully the tensions in the nonprofit-driven knowledge economy. Administrators adopted the same strategies and attitude as any other kind of institution, but they simultaneously demanded that employees and the public grant the university special conditions. And while those arguments no longer afforded Duke and other universities the same legal protections as before, they continued to carry weight with a broad cross section of the American public and its own workforce

EPILOGUE: TERRY SANFORD AND THE LIMITS OF LIBERALISM IN A NEW SOUTH UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

When Terry Sanford accepted the post of Duke University President in 1969, he inherited a campus at war with itself. As a liberal politician and local luminary, the Board of Trustees hoped Sanford could soothe bad feelings and simultaneously launch the university's new *inter*national ambitions. But Sanford's tenure at Duke put him on a trajectory of conflict with many people who had previously seen him as an ally. His story serves as a window into the limits of liberal institutionalism in the 1970s, in the South, and in a university community.

Sanford had a long history in Democratic Party politics in the state, dating to his teenage years spent knocking on doors for candidates in his small North Carolina hometown. When he transferred to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to complete his undergraduate work and earn a law degree, Sanford gravitated to the charismatic, liberal university president Frank Porter Graham. After returning from serving in World War II, Sanford set about realizing his political ambitions in earnest. He worked on Graham's losing Senate campaign in 1950 against the conservative lawyer (and Duke University Board President) Willis Smith, successfully ran for a state senate seat two years later, and managed Democrat Kerr Scott's bid for the U.S. Senate in 1954. In 1960, he achieved his long-time

goal of becoming governor of North Carolina.[1] There were even rumors of a vice presidential bid under Lyndon Johnson or Hubert Humphrey in 1968.[2]

Sanford's liberal credentials bolstered his appeal as a candidate for Duke president among Board members hoping for a change in narrative after the Vigil. Like Graham before him, Sanford's liberalism marked him as slightly to the left of the Southern Democratic party more generally. While hardly a civil rights activist, Sanford was a racial moderate who, as governor, became increasingly committed to the cause of equal opportunity.[3] He also offered reserved support for labor unions in a state dominated by fiercely anti-union businesses.[4] Most profoundly, Sanford's signature achievement as governor was the creation of the North Carolina Fund, a project to nurture local community action programs and tackle the state's persistent problem with poverty.[5] The Johnson administration cited the North Carolina Fund as a model when it launched its own War on Poverty in 1964.[6]

Still, though Duke's Board likely appreciated his past as a successful Democratic politician, activists had reason to be skeptical of the limits of his power. For one thing, Sanford conceived of his tenure in the university presidency as a bridge appointment between political posts. It would be a temporary sojourn - possibly five years – in which he could

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[1] Details of Sanford's life from Robert Korstad and James Leloudis, *To Right These Wrongs: The North Carolina Fund and the Battle to End Poverty and Inequality in 1960s America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 20-43.

[2] Howard E. Covington, Jr. and Marion A. Ellis, *Terry Sanford: Politics, Progress, and Outrageous Ambitions* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 351-367.

[3] Korstad and Leloudis, *To Right These Wrongs*, 43-52, 66-77.

[4] Covington and Ellis, *Terry Sanford,* 211-236.

[5] Korstad and Leloudis, *To Right These Wrongs*, 52- 96.

[6] Ibid., 2.

right the ship at Duke and keep his eye on higher office.[7] More importantly, for all that he was a hero to many southern liberals, Sanford was also a consummate politician, studiously avoiding controversies whenever he could. For instance, he evaded taking too liberal a stand on racial justice throughout the 1940s and 1950s, going so far as to support the state's Pearsall Plan, designed to allow communities to avoid integration after the *Brown* decision.[8] Sanford may have been a skilled consensus builder, but campus activists would be justified in wondering whether he was committed enough to set the university on a truly progressive course.

In fact, installed as university president in 1970, Sanford quickly embraced Duke officials' talking points about the special nature of the university and the consequent limits to the rights of nonacademic employees. Sanford demonstrated this thinking in a ranging and forceful open letter to his "Colleagues" on the eve of the 1979 union election, in which he summed up what was the university's entire, multi-faceted case against unionization. Mirroring his approach to criticism elsewhere, his letter was part defense of his administration's actions and part veiled threat of the dire consequences of unionization.[9] Sanford first shored up his liberal bona fides by professing himself historically "favorable to unions," even when they "have had little support."[10] His liberalism on the question of labor *more generally* thus established, Sanford could then proceed to a defense of the special circumstances represented by the university which he had agreed to lead.

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[7] Covington and Ellis, *Terry Sanford,* 378-9.

[8] Korstad and Leloudis, *To Right These Wrongs*, 33-36.

[9] For another revealing example, see his correspondence with UAW President Douglas Fraser, in Box 134, Terry Sanford Records, Duke University Archives [Hereafter DU Archives.]

[10] Sanford to Dear Colleagues, Feb. 1, 1979, Labor Unions Reference Collection, DU Archives.

It was essential, he argued, that the university's employees recognized that "Duke is not a commercial enterprise that distributes large profits if salaries and wages are kept low." Rather, it was a "nonprofit institution" with limited resources and a range of "obligations." Not only were unions fundamentally incompatible with Duke's raison d'etre, wage increases would force the university to raise prices in tandem or use "funds which would otherwise be used for" the more legitimate needs of libraries, financial aid, or faculty salaries. Finally, declaring himself "genuinely concerned about the impact of a union upon patient care," Sanford raised not just the threat of a strike to patient "lives" but also the university's capacity to provide "care to medically indigent persons." In short, a union would throw the balance of power in a university off-kilter, giving nonacademic employees "more power than all our other constituencies put together."[11] To counter employee efforts to bargain collectively, Sanford appealed to the institution's special nature and progressive character– so committed to public service that it categorically could not abide an employee union. Sanford's appointment, then, did not provide a boon for unionization efforts, or ensure the university's fair-minded recognition of employee discontent. Rather, Sanford's personal liberal reputation became aligned with, and even served as justification for, the university's institutional interests as a major economic enterprise.

Sanford's relationship with local labor activist Wilbur Hobby offers a revealing glimpse into the clash between Sanford's public reputation and his actions at Duke as well as into the institutional constraints brought by coalitional politics in the 1970s. Rising through the ranks of the tobacco union in Durham, Hobby eventually served as the Southern Director of the AFL-CIO's Committee on Political Education (COPE) before becoming president of

[11] Ibid.

the state federation in 1969.[12] Both major figures in North Carolina's Democratic party, Hobby and Sanford had known one another a long time. But, like other liberal and labor activists, Hobby felt betrayed by Sanford's actions as Duke President. In 1972, Hobby wrote directly to Sanford to protest anti-union "smear" literature being circulated on campus, "full of half-truths, innuendos, and insinuations," which he called "a discredit to an enlightened university."[13] Hobby's critique of the university as "un-American" clearly hit a nerve, as it set off a flurry of complaints to Sanford from within the university's own administration.[14] Yet, despite the blustering tone of his correspondence, Hobby also sent a handwritten Christmas card to Sanford noting that they had "plenty of work to do to build the Democratic Party."[15] Labor leaders like Hobby struggled to reconcile Sanford's political role as a Democratic leader and his institutional role as a union-buster; Hobby might harshly protest the university's actions but he also needed to maintain Sanford as a political ally.

Sanford's work as Duke President put him in direct conflict with the very people his previous political work had sought to empower. If state or national political leaders were incentivized to make peace with the apparent conflicts in Sanford's actions, union activists publicly accused him of personal hypocrisy. These resentments were sharpened by his campaigns for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1972 and 1976, which overlapped with the university's increasingly aggressive anti-union campaigns. Why was "President

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[12] A Durham native, Hobby grew up mostly in the white working-class neighborhood of Edgemont on the city's east side. Wilbur Hobby, interviewed by Bill Finger, Mar. 13, 1975, Interview E-0006, Southern Oral History Program Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

[13] Wilbur Hobby, President, NC State AFL-CIO to Sanford, Nov. 30, 1972, Box 134, Sanford Records.

[14] See Adams to Huestis, Dec. 11, 1972, Box 26, Vice President for Business and Finance Records, DU Archives.

[15] Hobby to Sanford, handwritten Christmas card, Dec. 1972, Box 134, Sanford Records.

Terry Sanford a man of high moral and ethical standards, Yes, even worthy of being President of these United States" working so hard to prevent poor workers from having a say in their own lives?[16] Was that not simply "the American Way, The Democratic Way. Yes, the same way the President of the United States is elected, through the Ballot Box?"[17] To campaign for president as a liberal at the same time as he vigorously opposed unionization on campus seemed to activists like the height of duplicity.

The campus union conflicts made enemies of old allies. For a while, Sanford's adversary at the union was a man named Howard Fuller, who sometimes went by the name Owusu Saudauki. Fuller had cut his teeth in activism with Operation Breakthrough (OBT), the Durham community action organization started under the North Carolina Fund. Though there is no indication that Fuller and Sanford knew each other personally, Sanford's pet program helped launch Fuller's activist career, and the latter certainly made his share of headlines during his time with OBT. A gifted and irrepressible organizer, an unyielding activist, and an intellectual radical, Fuller helped inspire and guide the city's poor-people's movement in the 1960s.[18] In fact, union organizing on campus was in some ways a manifestation of the achievement of OBT and the neighborhood councils. Many of the union's most ardent organizers and members worked with its programs at some point.[19] Now Fuller and other OBT activists-turned-union members directed their ire on Sanford, the

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[16] Duke Hospital Workers Local 1199-D, leaflet, n.d., Box 134, Sanford Records.

[17] Ibid.

[18] For biography and significance of Fuller, see Korstad and Leloudis, *To Right These Wrongs*, 179-188, 194-6, 227-8, 316-321; and Christina Greene, *Our Separate Ways: Women and the Black Freedom Movement in Durham, North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 3-5, 114-123, 171, 175-191.

[19] Karen Brodkin Sacks, *Caring by the Hour: Women, Work, and Organizing at Duke Medical Center* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 43, 57-58.

original patron of the program. As governor, Sanford hoped the North Carolina Fund would tackle the state's problem with poverty; Duke employees now accused him of actively perpetuating a system of "poverty wages."[20]

Of course, Sanford did not invent the system of labor against which activist employees rebelled in the 1960s and 1970s. When he arrived on campus in 1970, Sanford accepted the leadership of an institution whose labor relations were shaped by a long and complex history of discrimination, negotiation, and conflict, embedded in a community with existing and sometimes overlapping relations of power. In the 1930s, university administrators successfully fought to restrict the state's power to regulate labor on campus, an effort which helped promote the institution's growth by restricting the wages and rights of its nonacademic workforce. As Duke expanded, its administrators used racial and gendered stereotypes to make sense of the particular types of people hired to do particular types of jobs on campus, and the relative status given to each. Most crucially, they represented black service workers as cheerful servants and objects of paternalistic charity, while white women were given supervisory roles in services or respectable, but marginal, clerical jobs.

At times, clerical and service workers each resisted certain conditions of their working lives. But it was mostly the university's black service workers who forced the university to reckon with its history of nonacademic workers through organized collective action in the 1960s and 1970s. As the legal edifice of nonprofit exclusion crumbled in those decades, black employees at Duke were able to leverage new social power to force an improvement in their working conditions. In response to their revolt, the university moved, however partially and reluctantly, towards a more formal and modern labor relations system.

[20] Harvey to Sanford, May 8, 1970, Box 35, Sanford Records.

Many employees celebrated these achievements, but they also wanted more. For these employees, Sanford's leadership aroused feelings of resentment and betrayal. At best, he embodied the limits of white liberalism in the decade, willing to sacrifice true progress for political and institutional advancement. At worst, his actions represented a reinvention of the university's hierarchical and obstructionist past. Sanford's response to campus union drives may have reflected institutional constraint, shifting political calculations, or deeply held beliefs about the special nature of enterprises like Duke. But, regardless of his motives, Sanford's actions also signaled a reconfigured rhetorical and social landscape around Duke as an employer. A liberal politician at the helm of an ostensibly progressive institution promising economic development, Sanford directly and publicly opposed employee demands for higher wages, better advancement opportunities, and a say in their working lives. And, while abandoning most of the paternalistic claims of old, he continued to emphasize the university's ostensibly special nature in ways that obscured its responsibilities as an employer.

To many of the poor people in Duke's orbit, Sanford had sacrificed his liberal promises on the altar of institutional advancement. In the end, neither Democratic (Sanford) nor Northern (Knight) background had predisposed those at the top of Duke's power structure to look kindly on the demands of the university's mostly black nonacademic workers. Perhaps no issue better revealed the sharp contradictions between the university's (or Sanford's) professed liberalism and its private ambitions than conflicts over urban renewal. The Duke administration under Douglas Knight successfully opposed the expansion of Highway 147 (also known as the East-West Expressway) in the mid 1960s, when plans

originally called for it to be situated along newly-acquired university property.[21] They argued that constructing a major thoroughfare there would disrupt and pollute the campus environment.[22] The highway commission accommodated the university, and ten years later, suggested a path further north and integrated plans for "an access ramp directly to the new parking garage connected with Duke Hospital North," the university's medical expansion slated to open in 1979.[23]

But, this new Duke-friendly plan meant the highway expansion cut directly through Hickstown, a small black neighborhood which developed in tandem with the university's growth in the early twentieth century. Many of its long-time residents worked at Duke for decades. Given the low wages they earned there, residents found the proximity to their workplace essential. The university had long benefited from this arrangement, explicitly seeking to employ these locals at wages and in conditions that mimicked patterns of domestic labor.

By the 1970s, Sanford and other administrators began to look upon Hickstown's proximity not as a benefit but as a hindrance to their progress – a poor, run-down neighborhood directly next door to their growing campus. In public, Sanford disavowed all prior knowledge and responsibility for the highway construction plans that would destroy the homes of many of his employees. He claimed that the university needed "to take the position that this is the responsibility of elected officials and that we cannot be expected to make

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[21] Reed Kramer, "The Durham Housing Problem and Duke University: A Two-Part Survey" (Honors thesis, Duke University, 1969), 14.

[22] Eric Moyen, "Carolina's Campus and Community: The Historical Development of Town and Gown Relations in Twentieth-Century North Carolina" (PhD diss., University of Kentucky, 2004), 265-266.

[23] Linda Daniel, Michal O'Fogludho and Kate Stone, "The Crest Street Controversy," *Aeolus: The Chronicle's Weekly Magazine*, Apr. 19. 1978, 8-9.

either the decision or alternative plans."[24] However, privately he wrote to one city leader to reassure him that "we support without reservation the completion of the East-West Durham Throughway […] we feel it is in the best interest of the Durham community that this phase of the project be undertaken for completion at the earliest possible date."[25] When Sanford's duplicity was eventually revealed, activists saw it as a yet another example of the insincerity lurking behind his professed liberalism.

Hickstown mobilized to resist the new project. In fact, longtime residents and Duke employees like Mildred 'Ma' Booth led the neighborhood's resistance.[26] Eventually, a compromise was struck to preserve some portion of the community.[27] But for residents, Sanford's back-door dealing showed "a lack of support for the community which has played an important part in the University's growth."[28] Community members' choice of words – "bitterness" and "betrayal" - speak pointedly to the feeling of promises forgotten.[29] "Service" was indeed a key element of the nature of Duke University. But, to these disheartened employees, instead of a story about the great public service performed by the university, it was a story of services rendered *to* the university. Laboring in the service of knowledge for poverty wages, they were higher education's unacknowledged patrons.

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[24] Sanford to Harvey Carter, Oct. 16, 1978, Isabelle Budd Papers, DU Archives.

[25] Sanford to Iley L. Dean, Apr. 4, 1978, Budd Papers.

[26] Hilda Odom, interviewed by Ashanta Scarlett, July 18, 1998, printed in *Crest St. Community Stories* (Durham: Center for Documentary Studies, 1998), 35.

[27] Tim Farrow, "Expressway Letters Reveal Contradictions: Sanford's Public, Private Stands Conflict," *The Duke Chronicle*, Oct. 24, 1978, 1.

[28] Daniel, O'Fogludho and Stone, "The Crest Street Controversy," 8-9.

[29] Ibid.

Employees, graduate students, and even faculty members of universities of today might find disheartening echoes in this labor history of Duke. As many wage battles to secure decent wages, fair treatment, and democratic governance, they confront institutions that trade on prestige, public service, and promises of prosperity while fighting tooth-and-nail to stave off unionization and preserve "appropriate" hierarchy. In other words, they confront institutions marked by profound contradiction and built on foundations of exploitation, privilege, hypocrisy, and hierarchy; institutions which honed their rhetoric and tactics years before on those lower down the organizational chart. As one employee told a journalist in the 1970s: "My father worked at Duke. His mother worked at Duke, and now three members of my family work there, too. I guess it's always been one of the best jobs you could find in Durham. But I'll tell you, they don't care anything about you here and I don't think they ever will."[30]

[30] Tony Dunbar, "The Old South Triumphs at Duke," *Southern Changes*, June 1979, clipping, Labor Unions Reference Collection.

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